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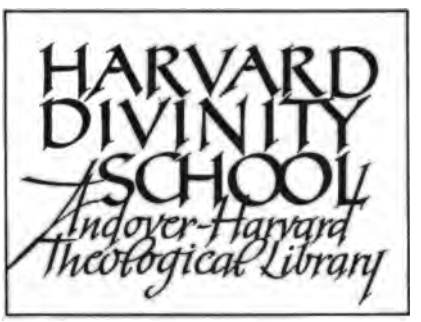
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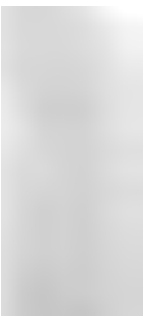

CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

AN ESSAY

ON THE

DUTY, MEANS, AND CONSEQUENCES,

OF INTRODUCING

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

AMONG THE

NATIVE INHABITANTS

OF THE

BRITISH DOMINIONS IN THE EAST

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD, BOOKSELLER TO HIS MAJESTY,

190, PICCADILLY; AND BLAIR, PUTNEY; AND

RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

1803.

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INTRODUCTION.

It is a position which jurists and moralists have never felt it necessary to demonstrate, that to hold fifty millions of people in subjection, without incurring any moral obligation towards them, is impossible. Yet this position, in theory so indisputable, has surely never been sufficiently recognised in the conduct of Great Britain with respect to Hindostan. So far indeed as regulations merely civil could improve the condition of our native subjects in the East, we have very considerable claims on their gratitude; but we have been little anxious to communicate to them that blessing which has been

to ourselves the source of almost every other —the Christian Religion. Many good things have been given them, but the best thing has been withheld.

There are those, however, who seem disposed not only to deny the existence of any obligation upon this country to attempt the conversion of the natives of British India, but also to maintain that our duty is precisely the reverse; that every active endeavour to promote the diffusion of Christianity throughout that quarter of the world, must be more than unwise, and worse than useless. Such reasoners would probably find few abettors among the public, were it not that, with regard to India, too many of the inhabitants of the mother country are both ill-informed and indifferent. Our general ignorance and insensibility on questions connected with our Eastern possessions are notorious. We are absolutely playing on the continent of Asia, for a stake which is hardly any thing less than our existence as a first-rate people, with a very superficial knowledge of the principle or of the chances

of the game in which we are engaged. We legislate at the distance of a hemisphere, for many millions of individuals, and are almost unacquainted with their character, and careless of their necessities.

In whatever manner this ignorance and apathy are to be explained, the proximate cause of them, it cannot be doubted, is the want of a comprehensive and authenticated body of information as to the real condition, moral and political, of British India. A well digested work of that nature is a great desideratum.

To supply this chasm in the national library, is a task which the author of the following pages is far from the presumption of undertaking. His design is merely to make some approximation to this important object, by a diligent use of those means of intelligence which it is within his competence to employ. A considerable part therefore, of the present Essay, is engaged in an endeavour faithfully to delineate from authentic sources, the condition of the native inhabitants of our Indian territories.

On the view which he takes of this subject, the Author rests his assertion and illustration of what he conceives to be the gravest and most solemn *duty* imposed on Great Britain by her connexion with India.

The *duty* of diffusing Christianity throughout the country in question being established, the next enquiry will be—by what *means* is it to be accomplished? It admits of demonstration, that for this end there are *means practicable, honest, peaceful, and fully commensurate to the magnitude of the enterprise*; and the Second Part of this Essay is dedicated to the developement of these means.

The friends and enemies of Religion however will be tempted to suggest still another question—what will be the consequences of a successful application of these means? The good will be curious to ascertain what is the extent of the sacrifice which they are to make; and the bad will be resolved to blink the duty if they find that any sacrifice is required. An attempt therefore will be made in the Third Part of this Essay to

estimate the *consequences*, civil and political, of introducing Christianity into India.

It now only remains that the author should endeavour to meet (what he has too much reason to anticipate) the allegations of his incompetence to the work which he has undertaken. It will be urged, that a subject of such intricacy and vastness was accessible only to the highest talents, combined with the most accurate local information.

The Author would be the last to maintain his own personal qualifications for his undertaking. But when the alledged incompetency is grounded upon his local disadvantages, he hopes these may not prove so great as might be conceived. The point to be discussed in these pages supposes an acquaintance equally with Christianity and with India. Now unhappily, the question, on one side at least, has been argued for the most part by men somewhat better acquainted with India than with Christianity; by those of our countrymen, who, as Mr. Burke expresses it, have been "*unbaptized*

in crossing the ocean." Was it possible for persons to decide upon the 'duty, means, and consequences' of introducing into the East, a system of which they but imperfectly comprehended either the claims, or the nature, or the influence? To be ruled by their objections would be to justify the Pope for the imprisonment of Galileo; or to side with the fanatics who libel the Newtonian system as virtual Atheism. From such an ignorance of Christianity the profession of the author ought to rescue him; and he trusts it has done this, in such a measure, at least, as to prevent him from any considerable misconception of its probable effects on society.

But it will be said, that if the one side has been espoused by men who knew India without knowing Christianity; the cause of evangelizing India has been pleaded by those who knew the Religion, without knowing the Country; and that a due acquaintance with the country could be cultivated only upon the spot. Neither member of this objection, however, is admissible. In the first place, it is not true that

the champions of the cause for which the Author of this Essay is interested, are men unacquainted with the peculiarities of India. The duty and policy of introducing Christianity into Asia have been generally admitted by every European nation, Protestant or Catholic, which has triumphed there. They have been recommended from the throne of Great Britain; they have been acknowledged by the highest political characters in and out of Parliament; they have been vindicated of old by several of our countrymen, the longest established in the East; and are now inculcated by men under the wing of whose civil, political, and commercial knowledge of India, the nation are glad to repose. Nor can it be admitted that such an acquaintance with India, as will subserve the cause of truth in the present discussion, can be cultivated only upon the spot. It is true that in any case where the general conclusion hinges upon a variety of minute particulars; where every fact must be subjected to microscopic scrutiny; where the field of observation is nar-

row; the reasoning of an eye-wtiness is entitled to very superior consideration. But where, as in the present instance, the eye of an individual could traverse but a small part of the span to be examined; where a single life could embrace but a small portion of the facts; where the history of half a century, and the character and condition of a vast people, are the objects of investigation;—it may be doubted whether he who states and balances the testimonies of all other travellers, has not a better claim to attention than he who only delivers his own. And such are the pretensions of the following Essay. The Author does not give evidence, but he has endeavoured with accuracy, and fidelity, to collect, produce, and sum it up. But the untravelled writer, upon the subject of India, enjoys one advantage to which his otherwise more fortunate rival can seldom pretend. He enters into the discussion free from all the trammels of party and prejudice. Of this freedom the Author hopes that evidences will be found in the following pages. He has endeavoured to 'stand fast in it.'

If any other justification were requisite for the publication of this Essay, the Author would state, in the first place, that he profited in the composition of it from the conversation and the papers of many distinguished orientalists; and, secondly, that it has already received the sanction of a tribunal * only inferior to that great court of the world, to which it is now presented. But his ruling motive for publication was, that this great and holy cause might not want any assistance which his head and heart could give it. He felt an irresistible desire to urge home to the bosoms of his countrymen their own imperious duties, and the crying necessities of their fellow-subjects in the East. They profess the Religion of Christ. In imitation of him, then, let them not suffer this prostrate country "to stretch out her withered hand" in vain. With the action of their Divine Master, they will soon also be authorised to adopt his language; and, in the con-

* The University of Cambridge.

templation of the advanced resources, civilization, and happiness of India, wrought by the introduction of Christianity, will be enabled to say to her "thy *faith* hath made thee *whole*."

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE DUTY OF INTRODUCING CHRISTIANITY INTO ASIA.

THE *general duty* of diffusing Christian knowledge can scarcely be called in question, in a country where the Religion of Christ is professed.

To acknowledge Christianity, is to admit that this Religion is exclusive, or that if this is true, all others are false. It is to allow that of all Religions, it is best suited to supply the wants of man, and to guard the well being of society. It is to acknowledge, that this system alone provides any security for the eternal happiness of its followers;—that whilst the salvation of the real Christian is certain, the salvation of the Heathen is a contingency;—that the last has no ground for anticipating the same enjoyments in kind or degree, which are pledged to the Christian by the unchangable promise of God. On all these grounds the

difference of receiving, or rejecting Christianity must be infinite; and therefore the duty little less than infinite, of diffusing a knowledge of Christianity.

But if the disciples of Christ were able to collect little, as to their apostolic duties, from the nature of their Religion, still they have a command of God from which there is no appeal—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

The *general* obligation of propagating Christianity standing upon so ample a basis, it is needless to waste time in enforcing it. Our business is rather to bring these principles to act upon a particular case, and to show the peculiar obligation by which Great Britain is bound to evangelize her subjects in the East.

1. In the first place, this duty may be inferred from the *power which Great Britain exclusively enjoys of accomplishing this great work.*

It would be considered as a sufficient answer to all claims upon a Christian country for apostolic enterprizes, that she had no sphere in which to begin her operations. Surely then it should have some weight in the opposite scale, when such a sphere is provided. But when to this general position it is added, that this sphere is appropriated exclusively to one Christian power; that it has

been furnished by a series of events, almost unexampled in the history of nations; that the fate of Christianity in one quarter of the globe appears, for a time at least, to be suspended upon the movements of this particular people; the duty, at every point of such a statement, assumes a more positive and commanding aspect. And such is the actual relation of Great Britain to India.—She is mistress of the East. She has all the power which moral, civil, and political influence can convey for evangelizing her Eastern subjects. She has succeeded to the Musnud of this vast empire, by means the most singular and inadequate. A company of commercial men, existing in the bosom of a commercial people, who inhabit a small island, which 1800 years ago was called the Ultima Thule, the last point of the habitable globe; have subdued a country containing sixty millions of people, the whole sea coast and many provinces of a vast continent, which, 3000 years since, when perhaps this island was without inhabitants, had made considerable progress in civilization and science. This conquest, till it was atchieved, might fairly have been supposed impracticable. When, indeed, there is taken into consideration, the infinite difference of physical force arising from the disparity of numbers; the nature of the climate;

the warlike temper of *some* of the Hindu* tribes; the careless and impolitic line of conduct adopted, in this, as in most other instances, by the mother country towards the infant settlement; the civil hands by which the sword was held; the leagues formed against Great Britain, by the most warlike and crafty power of Europe:—the result of the contest may well be estimated as one of the most singular phenomena by which the political horizon is diversified. And does not a conquest so complete, over such a territory, and atchieved in an almost miraculous manner, impose a high and solemn duty upon the conquerors? Is not the general and ultimate design of Providence, the universal diffusion of Christianity; and can its hand ever be more plainly recognized than in this instance, ministering, as it were, to that great end? Are the materials, and the machine so admirably adapted to them, thus marvellously brought together, and shall we not expect the operation to begin? If there is an obligation upon Great Britain, generally, to communicate her Religion where she can; if India is designed ultimately to receive this Religion;—surely we are now peremptorily called upon to lay our Eastern spoils at the foot of the cross. But this is not the only obligation to intro-

* Particularly the people of the northern provinces. See Orme's History of Hindostan.

duce Christianity into India, founded upon our relation to her. We shall proceed to state some others.

2. An obligation to evangelize India arises *from the wrongs we have done her*. The inhabitants of this island are too closely united to their countrymen in the East, to be fair umpires in the dispute between them and the Indians. Whatever, nevertheless, may be our unwillingness to join the general chorus of indignation which has resounded from every part of Europe against our eastern proceedings, some facts must be admitted, which serve to make good the point at which we aim. Our establishment in Hindostan was not accomplished without a long and tremendous struggle. Her internal peace, her population, her produce, her towns and villages, all felt the fury of the contest between the European powers. In some cases, it is to be feared, the unjust designs of one native prince on the other was encouraged, or executed, by our assistance; in others they were made parties in our disputes. Sometimes the arm of the tyrant was strengthened against the subjects, and at others that of the subject against the sovereign. When Great Britain had cleared the field of her enemies, she still did not, for a considerable time, feel any security of her conquest, and her subjects therefore adopted every method by which

they might reap the largest harvest in the shortest time. The consequences of such a mischievous line of policy will readily be surmised. From the day of the revolution till Lord Cornwallis took the reins of Government, India attested the wrongs she had suffered, by continually encreasing defalcations in that revenue which she had been used to pay into the exchequer of the Moguls*. With the administration of that illustrious person, indeed, her situation improved, her laws and customs were secured, her rights fixed and extended. But still it must be allowed, that, considering the nature of our first establishment in India, the greatest benefits we have conferred are of a compulsory kind; that the wrongs we have done them are deep and innumerable; that we by no means stand in such a relation to them, as to be privileged to withhold any good it is in our power to bestow. Has Great Britain then any desire to repair to the Hindu the breaches she has made, and to staunch the wounds she has opened? Give them Christianity, and they shall be forced to acknowledge that they have received *double* at our hands for all their wrongs.

3. A third obligation to communicate Christian

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* Appendix to Verelst's View of Bengal. Bolt's Considerations, &c, &c.

knowledge to India arises from the *benefits we have derived from her.*

There are two ways in which benefits may be yielded, either voluntarily or by force. Those benefits which India has conferred upon Great Britain have flowed through each of these channels. We have either forced them in the field, or obtained them by the natives spontaneously borrowing the shelter of our government, and yielding to us in return privileges, revenue, or territory. Now from whichever of these sources our eastern strength and wealth arise, the possession of them binds us by an additional tie to confer every benefit which we are empowered to bestow. A requital is asked for some millions of revenue; for the undisturbed and unfettered commerce of a whole continent; for fifty millions of submissive people. The case scarcely admits of reciprocal benefits in a common way of exchange. India, in her present state, has few physical or commercial wants which England can supply, and she yields more than we can possibly return. Give her Christianity, however, and we strike the balance in our favour.

4. India has a fourth and still stronger claim upon us for Christian instruction.

Our eastern possessions are not to be regarded simply in the light of a remote country, bound to

us by political or commercial treaties, and at liberty to cut the knot when she finds the bond of alliance troublesome; but we have united her in perpetuity to ourselves; we appropriate her soil, and her revenue; we are prepared to resent the slightest breathings of independence; we forbid her obedience to her own monarchs, or to any foreign sceptre. What are we then but her *rulers?*— But if this is true, have not the Hindus the rights of *subjects?* Is not Hindostan, as a part of our empire, entitled to all the claims and privileges which other provinces possess? If so, is it just that she should want the richest boon we can bestow? Are Jamaica, and the different islands of the West, (though even these might justly complain) to possess religious advantages which are denied to India? The claims of subjects upon their monarch are not inferior to those by which a child appeals to the bosom of a parent. Could a parent then, for any imaginary advantage, leave his offspring enslaved to the most terrific, sanguinary, and degrading superstition?

But, it may be asked, does the superstition of the Hindus deserve this severe reprehension; and are the votaries of it objects of such deep commiseration?

Upon a just reply to these questions the fate of this discussion may be rested. We do not hesitate

to say, that our *principal* obligation to communicate Christianity to the Hindus is founded upon the *malignant and pernicious character of that superstition of which they are the victims.*

A reply to the questions here suggested obviously involves a complete investigation of the religion of Brahma. If such an investigation promises to have considerable interest, it is still not difficult to discern, that it would easily carry us beyond the bounds which the form of this treatise prescribes. Such, however, is its importance, that there is only one method by which we shall feel ourselves privileged to shorten the discussion. As the population of Hindostan is partly made up of Mahomedans, we might possibly be expected to scrutinize and to expose the impostures of the Prophet. But as the number of Mahomedans is comparatively small in India; as Europeans have long been familiar with the absurdities and profligacy of their system; and as those who want information upon this point know where to seek it in works of the first reputation*; we shall consider it as allowable to pass over this part of the subject without much delay, and to bend all our force

* Prideaux's Life of Mahomet. White's Bampton Lectures. Eton's View of the Turkish Empire. Rycaut's History of the Turks.

to the investigation of the dispensation of Brahma.

In estimating the religion of Hindostan, it will be necessary to take a view of the *moral character*, and of the *civil and political institutions* of its inhabitants. For, in the first place, either the moral character (where the religion is not confessedlv and in all its parts divine) in a great measure forms the religion, or the religion the moral character. So that if the moral character is bad, the religion is either the offspring, or the parent of evil, and has therefore only such a choice of pretensions, as will, wherever the choice is placed, establish the conclusion at which we aim. And again, Hinduism does not, like the religion of Rome, by its ceremonies merely furnish an instrument of pomp to the civil power, and by its priests merely strengthen the ranks of a procession; nor does it, like the religion of Christ, when it has settled the fundamental principles of government, leave the forms of its administration to be determined by local circumstances. On the contrary, it is not satisfied with the altar, but it takes the seat of legislation, and even mounts the steps of the throne. So that the same voice which condemns the civil and political institutions of India, must condemn the religion in which they originate. Nor would it be enough to say (if it were true, which it is not)

that Hinduism does not enforce these institutions: it should, on the supposition of its principles being acted upon, remove them. Where a religion professes to govern in every department, every unpunished crime must be charged upon it; and toleration of what is bad, in this case, falls little short of the enactment of it. We shall, therefore, proceed to examine the *moral character*, the *civil and political regulations*, *and the Religion of Hindostan.*

CHAPTER II.

ON THE MORAL CHARACTER OF THE HINDUS*.

As we conceive that very erroneous notions upon this subject prevail among Europeans, it appears right to attempt to shew in what circumstances

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* The view here taken of the character and Religion of the Hindus, will be found to be less favourable than that which has been given by some writers upon general oriental topics; and by the authors of certain essays which have recently been laid before the public. The author shudders at the crime of traducing any people; and is also aware of that charge of temerity he may bring upon himself, by presenting a portrait of India, so different from that wrought by some masterly hands. But he begs to have the nature and extent of his evidence fairly considered, before his estimate of Hinduism is condemned. Let it be remembered also, that many works on India, which at one time enjoyed considerable reputation, are now banished from the library of every man acquainted with the East. Let that testimony be duly weigh-

they may have taken their rise. Having evinced the probability, that the sketches which have been made of the Hindu character are by no means faithful, it will only remain for us to produce such as are drawn from the life. We contend then, that the general practice of the writers upon this subject has been to adorn the Hindus with virtues which by no means belong to them. If it is asked what account can be given of such unmerited panegyrics; it would not be difficult to reply to the question. Every man who has discovered, or conquered, or assisted to con-

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ed which has been furnished by individuals, whose local opportunies, and freedom from bias, are well ascertained. It is but just to add, that the author has not given publicity to this statement, without the most serious search into all the most notorious and accredited channels of information; without balancing the contending opinions; or without private communication with several persons, whose situation in India, and whose reputation throughout Europe, constituted them the fairest umpires in this dispute. One more point is worthy of observation;—that as Bengal is likely to be the first and principal field of our exertions, it was of importance to enter most minutely into the character of the inhabitants of that province; and that of all the people of Hindostan, the Bengalese are most strongly marked with those features which we have assigned as generally characteristic of the Hindus.

quer, a remote country, feels that he himself gains something from the rank which this country occupies in the scale of nations. Hence it arose that the illustrious Raleigh tells us, the elixir of life is found upon the continent of America: and hence it is, we are informed by Ctesias that there are fountains of liquid gold in India. Or if such persons really conceive that solid advantages must accrue to their country, from the intercommunity between their discovery or conquest and their own nation being encreased, they esteem their exaggerated estimates a kind of 'holy lie,' which the expediency of the case may warrant. Added to this, there is a feeling of superiority in seeing others blindly admit what we know to be false, which is the source of much spurious intelligence from distant lands. Since then it is from persons thus situated, that our first impressions concerning Hindostan were principally derived, we are certainly at liberty to look that evidence in the face which we have received. There are two circumstances of a less general nature than these, that should be specified, and which have a similar bearing upon our argument. The first is grounded upon the *peculiar history of* Hindostan, and the next upon a *peculiarity of philosophic opinion* which has for some time prevailed.

The Hindus, it is to be considered, are an in-

jured people. Their country, for near a century, has been made a stage, upon which the Western nations have disputed for the empire of the world; their population has been drained to fill the ranks of the contending parties; and whoever has conquered, the Indians have bled. These wrongs have naturally given them an interest in the eyes of those who have not immediately profited from their spoils; and those who pitied them have justified their commiseration by elevating the objects of it. Their cause has moreover been pleaded before a most august assembly, and by the first orators of the age. It was the business of these men to take the ground of argument most favorable to the Hindu character, and in the moment of their enthusiasm they have sometimes gone beyond the truth. The influence of such pleadings has naturally been felt throughout Europe, and has done much to give the Hindus a higher place in the general opinion, than they deserve.

The second specific cause at which we hinted, a peculiarity in the opinions of the times, is indebted for its celebrity to the school of Geneva. It is that of degrading the virtues of civilized society, or allowing nothing to be good which is not barbarous. The result of this notion is a profuse and universal panegyric upon every people who are

without the confinement of cloathing, and beyond the grasp of law. India, perhaps, did not quite deserve the homage of these modern philosophers, and she certainly will be little thankful for it. She has, however, been placed in the singular situation of receiving, as in the two cases specified, the pity of the good for her imaginary virtues, and the applause of the bad for her supposed barbarism. Upon the whole, it may be concluded, that men have fancied, rather than drawn, a picture of India; and that the poet would not, by a more familiar acquaintance with her streams, have seen reason to change the epithet by which he described them.

" —— Loca *fabulosus*
Lambit Hydaspes."*

We now proceed to state those qualities which may be proved upon unquestionable evidence, to be predominant in the Hindu character.

The first quality upon which we shall insist, is *treachery*.

It is one, among the innumerable evils of war, that it seems to authorize a line of conduct widely different from, and even far inferior to those vindictive but manly operations which are its proper in-

* The Hydaspes falls into the Indus.

struments. The history of every campaign accordingly affords examples of the employment of stratagems which, if transferred from the field to the common walks of life, would destroy all the relations of commerce, and all the confidence of friendship. The nations of Europe, however, shew their abhorrence of this deviation from the laws of truth, by their general consent to inflict upon all detected spies the punishment of death. But as such deviations are endured even among a civilized people, it might be expected that where the interests of society are less complicated, and the relations less abundant, treachery would enjoy a greater licence; and accordingly it is found to reside more or less among all barbarians. But it is, perhaps, peculiar to the Hindus to admit it *as a principle of legislation, and to practise it in every conceivable situation.*

The first point may be established by an examination of the Code of Gentoo laws translated by Mr. Halhed. Every magistrate is ordered, as a point of duty, before he prepares for battle, " to send to the adverse party, a man of intelligence, and well skilled in artifice, to insinuate himself among the enemy's men, and make them dissatisfied with each other, that they may quarrel and fight among themselves, and so be ruined.* The

* Halhed's Code, &c. p. 114.

same Code holds out singular privileges to the creditor: "If a man hath lent money to one of the same family, or to a man of bad principles, he shall, by evasive pretences, get hold of some of the debtor's goods, and by that means procure a payment*." The dangerous principle is next authorized of doing evil, (even under the sanction of oaths, and in the face of justice) 'that good may come.' "Wherever a true evidence would deprive a man of his life, in that case, if a false testimony would be the preservation of his life, it is allowable to give that false testimony†." Where veracity is thus suffered to bend to any circumstances, legislators, as might be conceived, will not long be nice in the choice of them. "If therefore," (adds our code,) "a marriage for any person may be obtained by false witnesses §, such falsehood may be told; as if, upon the day of celebrating the marriage, it is liable to be in-

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* Code, p. 20.

† Code, p. 115.

§ The Abbe Raynal, speaking of the Laws of India, says, 'La population est un devoir primitif, un ordre de la nature si sacré que la loi permet de tromper, de mentir, de se perjurer, pour favoriser un marriage.' Hist. des Ind. tom 1, liv. 1, p. 81, 8vo. Paris, 1795.

It was not in one who had professionally bound himself never to marry, that this Gentoo law ought to have found a patron.

complete for want of certain articles, if three or four falsehoods be asserted, it does not signify." From promoting what is expedient, the system goes on to patronize what is vicious. "If a man by the *impulse of lust*, tells lies to a woman, or, &c. &c. or if it be for the benefit of a Bramin, in such affairs falsehood is allowable*.

If the above regulations be compared with those of any other code which has been transmitted to us, we shall find them without a parallel. The only law which approaches to the same level with them, is that of Lycurgus, which rewarded successful thefts. Of this, however, it may be observed, that it was intended to favour rather dexterity of hand than any mental evasion; that it licenced knavery only in some particular department; that it has ever been considered as an indelible blot in a code distinguished only by its ferocity; and that it assisted to form the character of

* It might be added, that one of the deities whom they worship is 'Policy:' a deity who under the title of 'Expediency,' obtains perhaps a little too much veneration from some of the philosophers of Europe. Brahma, like the Olympian Mercury, is the patron of thieves.—Essay on the Gods of Greece, Rome, and India. Sir Wm. Jones' Works.

a people who were the scourge, and the pest of the continent upon which they dwelt.

We now proceed to shew that the actual character of the Hindus is such as these peculiarities in their legislation might lead us to expect.

Whoever is at all acquainted with the history of those campaigns which now for more than half a century have employed our arms in the East, will find himself rather encumbered with evidence of the treachery of the natives, than distressed by the want of it. The works of Orme, Holwell, Dow, Maurice, Scrafton, &c. &c. produce it in every page. Treaties solemnly ratified, whilst other treaties are contracting with an opposite power; articles of capitulation violated by the murder of the besiegers, or the besieged; truces broken at the moment of the greatest confidence; drugged bowls and poisoned meats*; parchments sealed with blood, and contracts cut to pieces by the dagger; the breach of the best guarded promises, and the most sacred oaths:—these are circumstances which are every instant exemplified in the history of Hindostan.

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* Salabad Jing prevailed on his mother to poison her son, his brother; which she effected by sending him a plate of victuals, prepared, as she too truly told him, with her own hands. Orme's Hist. i, 274.

The nature of this Essay does not admit of our producing the extracts in which these facts are recorded; and indeed they would lose much of their force if they were to be singly quoted. We shall rather resort therefore to a still more decisive and compendious sort of evidence, and shall shew in what estimation the Hindu character, as to honesty, is held among those different classes of people with whose sentiments we are acquainted.

The first evidence we shall adduce is on the part of *our own countrymen.*

Mr. Holwell for some time presided in the Cutcherry Court at Calcutta, and is well qualified to decide upon this question. He has besides such a bias to Hinduism, that he is always disposed to recommend the Religion by panegyrizing those who adopt it. He, however, says of the Hindus, "They are a race of people who, from their infancy, are utter strangers to the idea of common faith and honesty *."

The testimony of Lord Teignmouth must not, (especially where it speaks so decisively) be withheld upon this point. "A man," he says, "must be long acquainted with them, before he can believe them capable of that barefaced falsehood,

* Holwell, Hist. Rem. vol. i, p. 228.

servile adulation, and deliberate deception which they daily practise *."

Governor Verelst also has every pretension to be heard upon the subject, and his opinion is equally decisive. "An Englishman," he says, "will ever be unfit to follow the subtle native, through all his arts to conceal the real value of his country, to perplex and to elude the payments." And, again, when drawing the character of an individual; "His character has little to distinguish it, except that low cunning, intrigue, and deceit, so general in this country." In the View of Bengal, drawn up by the same gentleman, we find the following extract from the Proceedings of the Fort William select committee. "The venality which forms a part of the genius of the people, and which is known to be openly exercised, or tacitly allowed by government, without drawing any shame or discredit on the guilty, or being thought any particular hardship on the injured man, &c. &c †.

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* Parl. Proceedings against Mr. Hastings, vol i, p. 67. See also Tennant's Indian Recreations, vol. i. This writer is seldom quoted, because, though his means of information were considerable, and he seems to intend telling the truth, his pages teem with the most unaccountable contradictions.

† Verelst's View of Bengal, pp. 58. 224.

Indeed, it appears that the native governments, by their own delinquencies, leave themselves little at liberty to coerce the knavery of their subjects. "The governments of India, (says an elegant historian,) have no idea of national honour in the conduct of their politics; and as soon as they think the party with whom they are engaged is reduced to great distress, they shift, without hesitation, their alliance to the opposite side, making immediate advantage the only rule of their actions *."

The testimony of the Baptist Missionaries is equally decisive, and has one peculiarity attached to it. During the first few months of their residence in India, they speak with admiration of the mildness and simplicity of the people. By degrees, however, they discover their error, and acknowledge that nothing but the treachery of the Hindus could have covered the vices which throng in their character †.

These extracts may be sufficient to decide upon the estimation, in which those of our own countrymen who are best qualified to judge hold the honesty of the Hindus. We proceed next to shew, in a few words, that the judgment *of the*

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* Orme. † Accounts of Bapt. Mission. passim.

Mahomedans has not been more favourable to them.

This may be inferred in the first place from a singularity which occurs in the policy of the Mahomedan rulers of India. Upon the first conquest of the country, the Moors attempted to govern it by those regulations which had succeeded too well elsewhere; and which are found to be sufficient barriers against the chicanery of the subjects of every other empire. But they at length discovered, that nothing but an Indian could cope with an Indian; and therefore, by way of securing the revenues of the provinces, they universally vested in the hands of the natives the office of collecting them*. Thus it is, that Hindostan presents us with the degrading picture of wretches borrowing the sword of their conquerors, to spoil the possessions, and draw the blood, of their countrymen†. The same fact may be established by direct quotation from a singular paper inserted in the Asiatic Transactions. It is contained in an address of Timur to his agents. "Like those Demons, who, with a view to deceive, can assume the most specious appearances, so the native of Hindostan cultivates imposture, fraud, and decep-

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* Scrafton and Orme, passim.

† Orme Hist. Fragments, p. 434.

tion, and considers them to be meritorious accom plishments *."

But let the *Hindus*, in the next place, take up their own cause, and we may be satisfied to rest our argument upon their decision.

The suspicion which they have of the most sacred characters, may be inferred from this singular article in their legislative code. " If the Bramins learned in the Vedas give evidence, *nine* of them are required; if there are not nine, there must be seven, &c. &c.: a *single Bramin* learned in the Vedas *cannot be a witness* †."

The same inference may be drawn from a peculiarity in their military arrangements. In an Indian army part of their pay is always due to them. And this arises not always from the necessities of the general, but from his policy. He uses his men as the Laplanders are said to manage their dogs; who do not feed them at night lest they should desert from them before the morning.

To these may be added, the late acknowledgment of a Bramin, that " his countrymen by the ravages of war, &c. have been induced to practise the vices forbidden, and would have become sa

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* Asiatic Miscellany, vol. iii. p. 179.

† Gentoo Code, p. 111.

vages, or would have been entirely rooted out, had not the glorious British nation established the standard of their government*."

We shall conclude these extracts with a saying that is almost proverbial in the East. "Parents love their grand-children, because they are the enemies of their enemies, (i. e.) of their own children." Such objects of mistrust are children rendered to their parents, says Orme, by the intrigues of an Indian Court †.

This account of the treachery of the Hindus, explains away much of that discrepancy of character, which the same author seems to have frequently discovered in a single individual‡ of Hindostan, and those opposite qualities which different authors have appropriated to them. Nothing but simplicity is uniform. The character which shapes itself according to existing circumstances will naturally change its features with its place. It has been said in like manner, that the identity of the cameleon can never be recognized, because it borrows the complexion of every object which it approaches. Men, however, it is to be hoped, will

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* Senkariah's Def. of Hindus. See Buchanan's Memoirs.

† Orme, vol. i, p. 122.

‡ See Party. Holwell's Hist. of Events: nor is he singular in this respect.

quit their prejudices upon the subject of the Hindus more easily than is usual with them; because their wounded vanity may, in this case, be solaced with the reflection, that they have been mistaken in those only whose very province it is to deceive.

2. The next topic to which we would advert, is the *indolence*, or rather lethargy of the Hindus.

Treachery is almost always the vice of a feeble mind; for it is seldom employed by those who can accomplish their end by the exercise of other powers. It was the vice of Carthage, but not of Rome. We might therefore, from a knowledge of the treachery of the Hindus, have been led to suspect them of feebleness and inactivity. The evidence, however, which we possess on this subject, leaves far behind every suspicion that our conception of the possible degradation of the human character could have excited.

The first witness we shall call is Mr. Orme. Having produced such causes as he conceives all sufficient to introduce indolence among a people, he next states the actual effects of them in Hindostan. "These causes," he says, "with various consequences from them, have altogether contributed to render the Indians the most enervated inhabitants of the globe*.

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* Orme vol. i. p. 5.

Mr. Scrafton may next be cited.—"They are strangers," he says, "to that vigour of mind, and all the virtues grafted on those passions which animate our more active spirits. They prefer a lazy apathy, and frequently quote this saying: It is better to sit than to walk, to lie down than to sit, to sleep than to wake, and death is better than all *."

To this may be added the respectable evidence of Niecamp †. "The natives are incurious, phlegmatic, indifferent, sensual, abject, and sedate, alike with regard to what is right and what is wrong. When their children are collected in great numbers, no noise or confusion ever takes place. Even during the hours devoted to recreation, they either amuse themselves with some very gentle pastime, or sit indolent and immoveable as statues, or throw themselves on the ground and sleep."

"The Hindu," says Mr. Tennant, "shelters himself from the turmoils of controversy in a total apathy, or listlessness of thought, more resembling the stillness of the grave, or of annihilation itself, than the common efforts of a rational being ‡."

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* Scrafton's Reflections.

† Niecampi Miss. Oriental.

‡ Tennant's Indian Recreations, i, 117.

Testimony to the same effect might be obtained from almost every writer familiar with the Hindu character; but we are contented to take that which is at hand, and decisive, without calling in such as is either remote or of dubious authority.

But it may be said, that testimony of a direct nature is scarcely ever decisive, because it may be balanced by opposite authorities. To this we answer, that some acquaintance with this subject enables us to deny that any such opposite authorities can be found. Moreover, indirect testimony of the same tenor abounds. Of this we shall give three specimens.

In the Bhagvat Geeta, a poem from the pen of the inspired Vyasa*, we find this sentiment in the mouth of Kreeshna, the incarnate Deity: "Man's wisdom is confirmed when, like the tortoise, he can draw in all his members, and restrain them from their wonted purposes †."

The general doctrine also of the God Kreeshna, in

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* "Vyasa, (or Veias) a poet of great antiquity, to whom is attributed the compilation of the Vedas, the only original Scriptures of the religion of Brahma; the composer of the Puranahs, which are venerated as poems of divine inspiration." Dedication of Wilkins's Translation of the Bahgvat Geeta, by Warren Hastings, Esq.

† Bhagvat Geeta, p. 135.

the same divine poem, is, that "every action of the body, whether good or evil, confines the soul to mortal birth;" (*i. e.* subjects it to wear the shape of some other animal when it has quitted that of man;) and that "an eternal release is only to be attained by a total neglect of all sublunary things *." So that the servants of him whose glory it is that he can do all things, must be distinguished by doing nothing, and our progress in the scale of being be measured by our uselessness and insensibility.

From these quotations we are surely authorized to pronounce of this poem, that, if it is inspired, the spirit which has breathed upon it can have no alliance with him who assigned to every "member" of man its wonted "office." If it is not inspired, the God here speaks the language of the people; and commends indolence, because they love it.

With one more quotation we shall dismiss our evidence upon this particular topic. "The *folly*," says the apologist for the Gentoo laws, "there specified is not to be understood in the usual sense of the word in an European idiom, as a negative quality, or the mere want of sense; but as a kind of obstinately stupid lethargy, or perverse absence

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* Bhagvat Geeta, Wilkins' Notes, p. 140.

of mind, in which the will is not altogether passive: it seems to be a weakness peculiar to Asia."

It may be observed, that the term *Asia* is here loosely used for that part of it with which Mr. Halhed was acquainted; and that there exists no evidence that folly similar to this is found under any other skies than those of Hindostan *. We are therefore at liberty to conclude, that the laws of Hindostan recognize, in the natives, an 'obstinately stupid lethargy,' which seems to be peculiar to them; which indicates a temporary surrender of the faculties; and which seems to leave them no power, but a pertinacity in doing wrong.

3. The two qualities of *treachery* and *indolence* which we have examined, have seldom been denied to the Hindus by those who have entered into any investigation of their character. But we now take a more contested ground when we pronounce them to be devoid of that *mildness and humanity* which have been so frequently attributed to them.

If it be enquired, in proceeding to this discussion, why men should have been more misled upon this point than upon others? We answer, it perhaps arises from this circumstance;—that the other vices of their character have all, as it were, taken

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* Halhed's Gentoo Code, p. x.

the part of this, and conspired to bewilder the examiner. Indolence is usually passive; and treachery seldom wears so bold a shape as that of cruelty. Besides, those who have decided authoritatively upon the mildness of the Hindus, have always felt themselves perplexed to account for their institutions exhibiting some of those features which belong only to a ferocious people. "How," says Montesquieu, "is such a character to be reconciled with their atrocious actions, their usages, and their barbarous forms of penance?" The only solution of a difficulty like this, is, since this account of their actions and usages is certainly true, that the character is as certainly false.

We proceed to state a small part of that evidence, direct and indirect, by which the fact of the '*cruelty*' of the Hindus is established.

In the first place we find our own opinion strongly confirmed by the declaration of Mr. Orme. "Poisons and assassinations are, in the practice of the great, the common method of removing those who stand in opposition to the ambition of others; insomuch that the history of one century in Hindostan would furnish more examples of this nature, than can be found in the history of one half of the nations of Europe since the time of Charlemagne*."

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* Orme's Hist. i. 59.

—"From the frequency of these enormous practices, even the deaths which happen in the course of nature are imputed to those who receive immediate advantage from them*."

On this occasion we see Mr. Holwell also laying aside his Gentoo prejudices, and coming forward to condemn them. "The Gentoos," he says, "are in general as degenerate, crafty, superstitious, litigious, and wicked a people as any in the known world, if not eminently more so; especially the common race of Bramins; and we can truly aver, that during almost five years that we presided in the Judicial Cutchery Court at Calcutta, never any murder or other atrocious crime came before us, but it was proved in the end a Bramin was at the bottom of it†."—It is important for us, who are tracing the vices of the people backwards to their religion, to observe that the ministers of this religion are themselves the most vicious.

The Baptist missionaries, after some trial of the natives, speak as decisively as others upon this point. "The stories of benevolence, humanity, and meekness, are all false.—Lying, avarice, perfidiousness, cruelty to animals, servility, are prominent features in their character:—great num-

* Orme's Hist. i. 59.

† Holwell Hist. of Ev. p. 151.

bers of cows are annually starved to death, merely through the avarice and neglect of their owners*."

Mr. Scrafton will again assist us with his testimony. "They (the Hindus) are found still more cruel and rapacious than their foreign masters (the Mahomedans); and, what is more extraordinary, the Bramins still exceed the rest in every abuse of power; and seem to think, if they bribe God by bestowing a part of their plunder on cows and faquirs, their iniquities will be pardoned †."

So much has been said of that *charity to the poor* recommended by the Bramins, that it may be worth while, under this head, to spend a few moments upon it. A very accurate observer has left us the following account of it. "The Bramins are zealous in recommending alms-giving, in order to excite the other orders to be liberal towards their own. They inform them, that the alms given to Bramins are pleasing to the Deity, and extremely profitable to the donors; but that alms otherwise bestowed, bring no recompence ‡."

The historian already quoted, shews us also by what iron restrictions their benevolence is guarded. "The fear of contamination prevents all of the In-

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* Acc. Bapt. Miss. p. 138.

† Scrafton's Letters, p. 27, letter 1.

‡ Rogers on the Ceremonies of the Bramins, part i. c. 5.

dian religion from giving shelter, or administering to the wants of any who are not known or recommended to them; and, confining all their sentiments of humanity to persons of their own cast, they suffer the stranger to perish without compassion*."—Real charity discriminates, but it does not restrict. "Do good unto all men, but especially to the household of faith."

Another fact which has been alledged in proof of their humanity is, the guilt which they affirm to be contracted by killing even the smallest insect. The degree of this guilt, however, may be estimated by looking at the nature of the expiation provided for it. "For killing insects of any sort bred in rice or other grain, &c. &c.—eating clarified butter is a full expiation †." Besides, they do not hesitate to treat in the most savage manner, or even to starve the animals which they principally venerate ‡.

Much indirect testimony may be collected to the same effect from a cursory survey of some of their *religious ceremonies*,—their *laws*,—and their *customs*.

1. Of their *religious ceremonies*. Dr. Bucha-

* Orme, ii. 45.

† Institutes of Menu, ch. 11. art. 144.

‡ See extract above from Bapt. Miss.

nan, in the Essay which he has lately given to the public, has stated these ceremonies in order. We shall copy his account of them, as the most full and accurate with which we are acquainted; and as sanctioning a statement which, upon our authority alone, might scarcely be credited.—"1. Children are sacrificed by their parents to Gunga or the Ganges.—2. They are hung upon trees in baskets, and devoured by birds of prey.—3. Female infants among the Raghpoot Hindus are destroyed by starving.—4. Men and women drown themselves in the Ganges at the places reputed holy.—5. They devote themselves to death by falling under the wheels of the machine which carries their gods.—6. Widows are burned alive with their deceased husbands.—7. Widows are buried with their deceased husbands.—8. Persons supposed to be dying are immersed in the river.—9. The inhuman practice of swinging with hooks passed through the integuments of the back.—10. The practice of dancing with threads, canes, or bamboos passed through the sides.—11. The passing spits or other instruments of fire through the tongue or forehead.—12. The falling from a height on sharp instruments.—13. The practice of swinging over a fire." This is usually performed with the head downwards.—"14. The practice of climb-

ing naked a tree armed with horrid spikes.—15. The innumerable modes of self torture *."

It may here perhaps be objected, "that the Hindus practise these rites in compliance with the commands of their religion, and that therefore the cruelty of them must be charged upon their gods, and not upon themselves." We answer, that they conceive only three of these to be of divine appointment; so that whilst we reserve these to condemn the religion, we are at liberty to employ the rest to condemn the people.

It has also been contended, "that men become voluntarily the subjects of these sanguinary rites," and therefore that we should not blame persons by whom they are conducted. To this it may be answered in the first place,—that the humanity of that man would be suspected who, instead of withholding the hand of the suicide, assisted him to point the weapon of his destruction. But secondly, we cannot pronounce men volunteers in suffering till we are assured, that the fear of disgrace, or the tyranny of custom, has not goaded them on to ruin. We know, moreover, that in every case where these rites are undergone, either present or posthumous advantages are conferred;

* Buchanan's Memoir, Appendix, p. 97.

that where they are refused, sometimes death, sometimes slavery, generally the loss of cast, and always dishonour, are the immediate consequences. And, lastly, so far are they from universally relishing these ceremonies, that there is now in the neighbourhood of Calcutta a very considerable village, peopled by those who have escaped the hands of the executioner. Widows for whom the pile was erected, or for whom the grave yawned; old men and women whom the next tide of the Ganges would have overwhelmed; young persons whom nature had cast in an imperfect mould, here herd together as in a "city of refuge" from Hindu ferocity*."

But if it be said, "that much must be forgiven to errors upon mysterious points, and to enthusiasm in the approach to an Invisible Being;"—we would next (admitting this objection for the sake only of argument) carry our readers to another ground of debate.

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* The author has not seen any *writer* by whom this fact is mentioned, but he has received it from unquestionable authority. —It may be observed, that the milder policy of Rome admitted every slave who escaped from an exposure such as this to the rights of a citizen; and that it actually forbad the killing any slave for old age or sickness. *Suetonius in Vita Claudii.*

2. The *Laws* of a people are one of the best standards to which their character can be brought. The great legislator of Athens, was so persuaded that these must be suited to the genius of a nation, that he said he had given the Athenians—"not the best laws, but the best they could bear." As therefore we might conclude, from a view of the constitution of Athens, that the Athenians were possessed by a spirit of democracy, a love of pleasure, and a love of change: and as we might determine from the regulations of the isle of Paphos, that its inhabitants were licentious; so if we find the laws of Hindostan to be sanguinary, we may conclude that mildness and benevolence are not the characteristics of the people.

We shall content ourselves with producing a very few examples of, we believe, unprecedented severity in these laws, and with referring to some others.

"If a magistrate for *his own good* hath passed any resolution, whoever refuses to submit to such resolution, the magistrate shall cut out that person's tongue*."

"If a Sooder (a person of the lowest cast) sits upon the carpet of a Bramin, in that case, the ma-

* Halhed's Gentoo Code, p. 189.

gistrate having thrust a hot iron into his buttock, and branded him, shall banish him the kingdom; or else he shall cut off his buttock *."

" In any place where the magistrate is playing with any person at Choperbazee, or at tables, or any other such kind of game; in that case, if any person, without the permission of the magistrate, interposes with his hand, or by speaking, the magistrate shall put him to death †."

" If a man, without the permission of the magistrate, dresses himself in clothes like those of the magistrate, &c. &c. the magistrate shall put him to death †."

" If a man deprives of life a goat, or horse, or camel, the magistrate shall cut off one hand and one foot from him ‡."

A further examination into this code, would, on two distinct grounds, fix the imputation of cruelty on this people; the nature of the punishment inflicted; and the terrific disproportion which they bear to the crimes. Surely then we shall be prepared to admit the justice of the acknowledgment which the translator of this code most reluctantly makes, " that the compilation exhibits a va-

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* Halhed's Gentoo Code, p. 207.

† Id. p. 269.

‡ Id. p. 211, also 179, 180, et passim.

riety of crimes punishable by various modes of capital retribution, contrary to the general opinion adopted in Europe, that the Gentoo administration was wonderfully mild, and averse to the deprivation of life*."

3. A slight examination of some of the *Customs* of the Hindus will lead us to the same conclusion.

We shall here confine ourselves to one particular department, as well for the sake of brevity, as because it introduces us to customs unheard of among other nations, and which are, we think, sufficiently decisive of the character of the people by whom they are practiced.

The first custom peculiar to this people of which we shall speak, is called "erecting a Koor." The object of this practice is to frighten the officers of government from their demands, just or unjust, upon the persons or property of the Hindus. For this purpose they prepare a circular piece of wood for conflagration; elevate upon it, in general, some ancient female, and then consume the whole together. Her death, they conceive, or pretend, will be visited upon the heads of those who drove them to this sanguinary measure §."

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* Halhed's Preface to the translation of the Gentoo Code, p. lxii.

§ Sir J. Shore's (now Lord Teignmouth) Address to the Asiatic Society.

Another custom of the same kind is termed the "sitting in Dhurna." The person who practices it seats himself at the door of his adversary's house, making known his intention of eating no food till his desire, whatever it be, is accomplished. The unfortunate object of his vengeance is thus laid under an obligation to fast as long as the other; and there are frequent instances of both parties starving in this situation. At all events, the sufferings or death of the person who sits in Dhurna, are supposed to criminate him against whom he sits*."

Some cases of singular ferocity, founded upon these notions of retribution, are adduced by the noble author, from whom we have received the most accurate account of these practices†. They display a series of actions, no one of which could be perpetrated upon principle, by any other people; and all of which the casualties

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* Asiatic Researches, vol. v.

† A quarrel had arisen between two brothers, and a man of the name of Gowrie. The emissaries of Gowrie entered the house of the brothers, and carried off forty rupees. They returned and were informed of it by their mother. They immediately led her out to an adjacent rivulet, and one of them severed his mother's head from her body, with the professed view, as entertained and acknowledged both by

and varieties of vice perhaps never produced, in any other nation, during the administration of one individual.

With these citations we close our examination of the moral character of the Hindus. In summing up our evidence, it may be observed that *treachery* and *indolence* furnish the decisive traits by which an Indian may be recognized, whilst his *cruelty* often takes a more terrible aspect than that of any other people. It may also be remarked, that these master passions, as they subdue every thing else, so sometimes they mitigate each other. In some cases the excessive apathy of these people bids them prefer inaction to treachery or revenge. In others, the vindictive spirit renders them too furious to slumber, and too incautious to deceive. In almost every case when they do act, or where they would revenge, they employ the weapon of treachery. They are sedately cruel, mischievously idle, and scientifically perfidious.

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parent and sons, that the mother's spirit, excited by the beating of a drum during forty days, might for ever haunt, torment, and pursue to death, Gowrie and the others concerned with him. The last words pronounced by the mother were, that she would blast Gowrie, and those connected with him. There are two more instances recorded of a no less sanguinary nature. Asiatic Researches, vol. v.

Such a mixture of vices will not surprize those who have any acquaintance with the constitution of man. They will remember that disease also has its moments of vigour, and that the mind which generally does nothing, most frequently displays its temporary energy in doing wrong. They will consider also, that as harmonious arrangement is one of the qualities of a perfect mind, so it is the property of a bad one to reconcile discordances; and that as, in the first case, heaven ordains one virtue to strengthen the hands of another, so in the last, it lets loose each particular vice as an enemy to the rest.

It will be necessary, before we proceed to the discussion of the civil and political regulations of Hindostan, to consider, in a few words, the moral character of the Mahomedans in India. We have already said, that the inferiority of their numbers, and the publicity of their character, will justify us in touching but lightly upon this subject. The prevailing features by which a Mahomedan may be recognized, are treachery and sensuality. More ardent than the Hindu, their indolence is only occasional, and their licentiousness is more unbridled and shameless. In other respects their qualities are much the same. They are alike skilfully perfidious, and calmly cruel; and were in this sense adapted to

each other, and to their late relative situations in India, that the vices of the subjects in some degree apologized for the ferocity of their rulers.

But it may be said, the Moors in India are cut off from the rest of the Mahomedan community, and may therefore change their character with their situation. A careful examination, however, will convince us, that wherever a disciple of Mahomet goes, his characteristics follow him.

We cannot do better than give a sketch of their character, which was taken upon the spot by an accurate observer. It carries with it this evidence of its exactness, that it resembles, in every particular, those portraits which other hands have left us. "The distinguishing qualities of the Mahomedans in India, are perfidy and sensuality. If we would come at their true character, we must look for it in their education. Till the age of five or six they are left entirely to the women and eunuchs. When the hours of school and company are past, they return to the seraglio, and the parents never scruple to admit them to all their plays and diversions, at which are exhibited representations of every thing that is beastly and unnatural, not in a manner to excite horror, but merely to afford diversion. Nothing ever shocked me more than to see the insensibility of the parents in exposing such scenes to the tender minds of their

children. The slaves, and women of the seraglio, wait with impatience the first appearances of desire, to debauch them unknown to the parents: and this manner of education continues till thirteen or fourteen, when they consummate their marriages, which are made by their parents in their infancy, and a separate household is formed for them. They are then forbid their father's seraglio, are permitted to see none but their mothers; nor has the father even permission to see his daughter-in-law: and from that time, that dissimulation, which they learned from their father's lessons and example, is practised between father and son; and too often a jealousy rises between them, which their history shews frequently ends in blood. Here then you see the seeds of that perfidy and sensuality which are the distinguishing qualities of an Indian Moor." After some more remarks of a similar nature, he adds, "I am sensible that I have altogether given the Moors a detestable character, and I am sorry to say, it is so universally true, that I never knew above two or three exceptions, and those were among the Tartar and Persian officers of the army, whose native manners were not yet entirely corrupted." We add one other quotation. "Hospitality is, I think, the only virtue they can pretend to. It seems to be a refuge from the oppression of the government, and many of them

scruple a breach of faith with any man they have entertained under their roof. By this you would think, friendship was a sacred bond among them. True, it is ever in their mouths, but rarely in their hearts, and it is a word seldom used but to deceive. Their friendship, like their devotion, is all ostentation; they will drink a dram in the intervals between each prayer, though all spirituous liquors are forbidden by their laws; and they will stab while they embrace you, for which reason the great men never embrace but on the left side, that the persons they embrace may not come at their dagger with their right hand*". Of this testimony, we may remark, that it is of so singular a nature, that, unless gained by long observation, an honest man would be too cautious to insert, and a man of talents too wise to invent it†.

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* Scrafton Lett. pp. 21, 22.

† The most ferocious resolution ever adopted by a number of men, was perhaps that taken by the Moguls in cool and deliberate council, when they had subdued the Northern provinces of China. It was that of exterminating all the inhabitants of that populous country to make room for their own cattle. This resolution was crushed only by the vigor and wisdom of a Chinese Mandarin. Gibbon, vol. vi. ch. 34, p. 54.

CHAPTER III.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF HINDOSTAN.

IT will be necessary here to discuss minutely only those institutions of the state, of which the evil is questionable; or which are peculiar to Hindostan; or which singularly affect the present question, either on account of the source from which they spring, or from the powerful influence which they exercise upon the situation of the people. We shall content ourselves with the bare enumeration of some others.

There appears to be no fitter place for pointing out the irremovable base upon which *despotism* is established by the principles of Hindu government. The submission of the people is not founded upon necessity; it was not first yielded to a monarch to whom nothing could be denied; it is not the result of a long series of regular concessions; but it is the recognition of a power suppos-

ed to be divine. "He," (the monarch) "is fire and air; he both sun and moon; he the god of criminal justice; he the genius of wealth; he the regent of waters; he the lord of the firmament. A king, even though a child, must not be treated lightly, from an idea that he is a mere mortal; no, he is a powerful divinity, who appears in human shape*.

We now proceed to the investigation of institutions purely civil.

I. Polygamy prevails, and is authorized throughout all those parts of Asia which are not in the possession of Christians: wherever they are found it is excluded.

Christians imagine that a strong argument against polygamy is furnished by the consideration that God gave only one female to the first man, even when the peopling of the world might perhaps have been assisted by a more liberal distribution of females. It is singular, that the Hindus also ought to reason in a similar manner; as, in their own cosmogony, the male, and a *single* female of the same Caste, are said to have been produced together†.

The point, however, may be argued upon more general grounds.

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* Institutes of Menu, p. 159.

† Colebrooke's Essay. Asiatic Researches. v. p. 54.

The great object of the legislator, in framing those institutions which regard the different constitution of the sexes, is to employ the natures with which he has to deal for the benefit of the state. Now it will readily be seen how far polygamy is from accomplishing this desirable end.

1. There is no reason for believing, that he who distinguished the sexes meant to cut one off from the privileges which the other enjoys. All other considerations are swallowed up by that of their common superiority, (in the possession of moral and intellectual powers) to every other animal. The legislator, therefore, who either enacts or permits the degradation of females, injures one half of his population. But the prevalence of polygamy has never failed to produce this degradation. The Turks boldly pronounce females to have no souls; and the language of the laws of Hindostan strongly marks out the low estimation in which they are held. "A man, both day and night, must keep his wife in such a degree of subjection, that she by no means be the mistress of her own actions: if the wife have her own free will, notwithstanding she be sprung from a superior cast, she will yet behave amiss*." Indeed, when females are suffered to minister only to the physical necessities of men, they

* Gentoo Code, p. 249.

are likely to be soon herded, in the general opinion, with those other animals, by which a different appetite is satisfied. Where also the mind is never required, it will never be employed; and females will consequently soon justify every charge of inferiority brought against them*. The first operation of polygamy, therefore, is to cut off the rights of women, and the second to render them unworthy to enjoy these rights. If to these considerations be added the dissentions of the seraglio, where all are struggling for that which all equally merit; the cravings of half satisfied desire; the jealous dominion of a tyrant who would be loved by all without himself loving any, and who seeks fidelity, without ever being faithful†; we must allow that no institution can add more to the weight of female misery.

2. Again, the constitution of the sexes should be employed by the legislator, to secure the *instruction* and *well-being* of the rising generation. We have already seen in our short account of the Mahomedans, (page 45,) the state of education among them, and have traced back their per-

* The character which the institutes of Menu gives of the Indian women, answers to this reasoning. Sir William Jones's Works, v. 3, ch. 9. p. 337.

† Lettres Persannes, passim.

fidy and sensuality to the lessons of the Haram. But this is not all: those educated among slaves, will never learn those equal rights which belong to all men; and therefore, if they want power, will become slaves themselves; or, if they have it, will become tyrants. Those who perceive none of these evils in the education of children thus situated, must yet admit, that the powers of the parent are not adequate to the instruction of so numerous an offspring, even if he had sufficient affection to attempt it. The state, moreover, not only requires the instruction of her youth, but a provision for *their well being*. This, however, will be ill supplied, where the number of inheritors bears so irregular a proportion to those from whom they inherit. The desire of providing for some, and the impossibility of providing for all, may have been among the causes, from which the practice of infanticide proceeded*.

3. The legislature should employ the difference of the sexes, as a means of turning the passions of men into their proper channel, and of confining them to it. Those who defend polygamy, usually admit the mischief of illicit and promiscuous connections. But the tendency of polygamy is to produce these. The births of males and

* Asiatic Researches, v. 4, p. 354.

females are nearly in the proportion of 18 to 17; so that allowing for the consumption of wars, and those various contingencies to which the males are subject, there is nearly an equality of marriageable persons of either sex. Polygamy therefore, by overstocking the great, must rob the poor, and force them upon unlawful means of gratification. That we need not doubt the truth of this reasoning, as applied to the case of Hindostan, appears from two circumstances. In the first place, the legislature tolerates prostitution, and their code of laws contains many statutes which relate to it*. And † secondly, the same code affixes a punishment to crimes, which an European would blush to name. Now all laws which respect unusual crimes, are enacted posterior to the commission of those crimes. Sparta had no law against patricide, because no parent had been murdered by his child. These laws, therefore, were not introduced into Hindostan, till the commission of the crimes specified had made them necessary‡.

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* Halhed's Code, sect. 2, ch. 9, p. 151.

† Institutions of Menu, ch. 11. art. 174.

‡ Eton informs us that crimes of this nature are by no means unusual in Turkey. Eton's Turk. Emp. c. 7, p. 275. It is said that in the Seraglio of Algiers, a woman is scarcely to be found. Hist. Algiers et de Salis.

4. It may be remarked also of polygamy, that it appears to be incompatible with the spirit of freedom. Freemen would never consent to have their families raked to excite the debility, or glut the lusts of their superiors. The best proof of this is, that polygamy never prevailed in a free country; that whilst the feeble and slavish orientalist has denied nothing to the nod of his tyrants, the more hardy inhabitants of the North have saved their daughters from those chains which they themselves refused to wear.

Where then, we ask, are the benefits of polygamy? It has been deemed by many a sufficient answer to this question, that it promotes the population of a country. This effect of polygamy has been assumed without sufficient data.

It should be considered, that the question is not, whether one man with many wives shall have a more numerous offspring than he who is confined to one; but whether he will have more than these several wives would produce, were they bestowed each upon a separate individual. But it may be affirmed, that the great are the principal polygamists in every nation, and that their offspring, cæteris paribus, are more likely to be reared than those of the poor. To this we answer, that the eye and immediate superintendance of a parent will save more children than pover-

ty will destroy. But even, if it should be admitted that population is promoted by polygamy, the concession would be of no consequence. Our improved knowledge of political economy has taught governments, that they have hitherto been too busy, rather than too idle, in the domestic concerns of their people; that force is the worst engine of a state; that the several instruments of a nation's strength have a kind of self-rectifying principle, and do not, like some algebraical processes, need a continual correction from the hand which conducts them. Where nature therefore, (as in this case) has ordained any proportion between the sexes, he would be a bad politician who stept in to introduce an institution which disturbed it. Our better acquaintance with the philosophy of politics has also taught us, that the population of a country has a tendency to outstrip its means of subsistence. And in India, however fertile, the frequency of famines, and the ravages by which they are signalised*, indicate

* A part of the ordinances of Menu is appropriated to the regulations in cases of famine; and from the rank and character of the persons pointed out as the sufferers in many cases, we may calculate upon the extent and severity of these visitations. Sir William Jones's Works, ch. 4, p. 165. and p. 397.

that the population already bears too hard upon the resources of the land. In such circumstances, therefore, the legislator is doubly culpable, if, besides the evil of interference, he throws the weight of government into an already overloaded scale.

If then it be admitted, that polygamy is an evil, the state of that country will be the most deplorable, where it prevails to the greatest extent. How, therefore, does India merit our commiseration, when her priests are frequently not content with less than one hundred wives*, and when five thousand women were immured in the seraglio of one of the most distinguished of her emperor †.

II. Another capital defect in the political regulations of Hindostan is the toleration of *slavery*. There is scarcely any peculiarity to be pointed out upon this subject, except the multitude of channels by which slavery enters, under a Hindu administration. There are no less than fifteen methods by which those may be cut off from the privileges of men, whom God has made free‡. Slavery (to mention some cases) is, among the Hindus, voluntary or hereditary: it may depend

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* Buchanan, p. 113.

† Ayeen Akberry, vol. i. p. 46. ‡ Halhed, 138.

upon the issue of a battle*, or the cast of a die*, or the caprice of a Bramin†. It might be expected, that from materials such as these, chains would be forged for half the people; and the fact is, that there is no part of the world where domestic tyranny finds so many, and such degraded subjects. It is quite unnecessary, in the present state of moral or political opinion, to delay this disquisition, by stopping to expatiate upon the evils of slavery. We shall make only one remark. The nations of Europe have learned experimentally, that when the state of society in any degree approaches to what it should be, the freest government is the best. Either of the conclusions which follow from this remark will suit our purpose. If the people of India are equally advanced in morals with those of Europe, they loudly call upon us to set them free. If, from their situation, slavery is necessary, they as loudly call upon us to instruct, and to reform them. Christianity would first unfit them for slavery, and then knock away their chains.

III. But the most serious subject of discussion among the political regulations of Hindostan, is the institution of *Castes*.

The four great Castes or tribes of India derive

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* Halhed, 139. † Id. 144.

their place in society from the respective dignity of those members or parts of Brahma from which they are supposed to have proceeded. The Bramins or priests proceeded from his head; the Chehteree, or warriors, from his arms; the Bice, or merchants, from his thighs; and the Sooder, or menials, from his feet. The classes inferior to these are almost innumerable, and are composed of persons born of parents whose marriage was rendered illegal by the difference of their Castes. From this last subdivision (whose generic title is Burrun Sunker*) the various artificers are supplied. Inferior even to these is a class of men called Pariars, who have either themselves fallen from their proper Caste, or inherit the disgrace and misfortune from their parents.

These different casts are forbidden to intermarry, and, with some exceptions, to exercise the trades of each other. They rank in the order in which we have enumerated them; and the line of distinction between them is wide and carefully defined.

It is surprising that some trifling advantages which arise from this peculiar institution, have

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* All these inferior classes sometimes obtain the name of Sooder, which is that of the fourth original class. Colebrooke's Essay. Asiatic Researches, v.

been sufficient to draw a veil over its evils. The encomiasts are numerous; and the names of Bossuet and Robertson are found in the catalogue of those who have not heartily condemned it.—We shall consider it briefly as to its influence upon the *morals*, *happiness*, and *interests* of a state.

1. The influence of Caste upon the *morals* of Hindostan.—The system of hereditary professions has obtained some respect, by being found among the institutions of ancient Egypt. There is no government, indeed, whose hand more strongly built, or more powerfully guarded the edifice of public morals, than that of this celebrated country. But we may observe, that there was another principle which reigned throughout the system of Egyptian legislation, which neutralized the institution we are considering. It was the principle of *responsibility*, which reached every member of the state. It is almost impossible to make the supreme power of the nation amenable to a lower tribunal; but when death had reduced the Egyptian monarch to a level with his fellow men, his own subjects sat in judgment upon him. Now scarcely the shadow of such a principle is to be discovered in the government of Hindostan. The Bramins are in a great degree exempted from responsibility. They suffer only a mitigated punishment for a variety of

crimes *; in no case is the punishment of death inflicted upon them; and in many a small fine is substituted for it †. The influence which these circumstances must have upon the moral character of the Bramins, and, through them, upon that of the nation, is obvious. Such is the necessity of restraint, that when men cease to be responsible, they cease to be virtuous; and such the efficacy of example, that a bad priesthood must make a vicious people.

But this distinction of ranks and privileges operates more directly to corrupt the lower orders. It is always found, that where the penal code is sanguinary, however the number of criminals may be diminished, the measure of the crimes is encreased. For men multiply offences where the last acts of retribution for them cannot be more severe than the first; and are careless about reformation when it would be of no use to them. But will not this cause assist to degrade the moral

* "In cases of adultery, when men of other Castes are to be deprived of life, a Bramin shall not be deprived of life, but the hair of his head cut off." Gentoo Code, p. 242.

"If a Bramin, who every day performs the Jug, commits a robbery that deserves death, the magistrate shall cut off the hair of his head." Gentoo Code, p. 226.

† Gentoo Code. passim.

character of such as the distinctions of Caste fasten down to a dishonourable place in society? Is a Polere likely to be virtuous, whose character will never entitle him to approach within ninety-six steps of a Namboory Bramin*? Will a high line of conduct be sought out by those whose shadow is supposed to pollute every thing over which it passes?—Such, however is the situation of a great part of the population of Hindostan.

In general it may be remarked, that any institution which separates rank from merit, is in itself unfavourable to morals;—that the order of nobility in Europe is rendered beneficial only by some peculiarities in its appointment, and the state of the countries in which it prevails;—that it would be highly mischievous, if, like the institution of Castes, it placed any individuals beyond the call of justice, or the reach of the sceptre; if it included a large proportion of the population of a country; if the lines of distinction were fanciful and vexatious; if its privileges were not at first the reward of merit; and if no man was suffered to win the honours to which others were born.

The cases of religious and civil distinctions of rank may also be thus contrasted. In the first

* Asiatic Researches, vol. v. p. 5.

case, the higher class feels itself privileged to hate the lower, because God has marked them with his displeasure. In the last, the noble pities and assists the individual, whose rank as a citizen has deprived him of the equality he possesses as a man. The Nayr, for instance, cuts the Polcre to the ground without remorse. The haughty noble of Spain, on the contrary, is always distinguished by the merciful treatment of his slaves*.

There is one fact with which the Gentoo code supplies us, which appears to decide the present question. "If a Sooder gets by heart the Beids of the Shaster, the magistrate shall put him to death."—It is thus attempted, by the influence of Caste, to pursue men beyond the present state; and having made this world a dungeon to them, to darken the only avenue by which they imagine the light of heaven could enter it.

2. It will scarcely be contended that any institutions which diminish the virtue of a people, can ultimately assist their *happiness*. But it may be worth while to enquire more particularly, in what way the happiness of Hindostan is affected by the distinctions of Caste. In order to satisfy this enquiry, some passages shall be produced which de-

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* Brougham's Colonial Policy, vol. i.

scribe the state of the Pariars *. "If a Pariar approach a Nayr, this last may put him to death with impunity †."

As Mr. Sonnerat has collected most of the circumstances relative to their situation into one point of view, we shall rest satisfied with borrowing his account. "They are regarded by other Indians as infamous, defiled, abominable, and reprobate; in every act, public or civil, they do not place them among the Castes. Proscribed by this degradation, they dwell in quarters distinct from others. Nor is it enough that they should be excluded from the towns, &c. &c. accessible to all others; they must be so far removed, that the wind may not convey any such impure and contagious influence as might be dreaded from their too great proximity. Their houses are hovels, into which it is almost impossible to enter, and they form little villages which they call Paretcheries." They are forbidden to draw water in the wells used by other Castes; and have some appropriated to themselves in the neighbourhood of their houses, round which they are obliged to place the bones of animals, that others may re-

* They are in other parts of India called Hallanchores, or Chandulas.

† Ayeen Akberry, vol. iii. p. 243.

cognize and avoid them. In general the employments assigned to the Pariars are of the most vile and disgusting nature. When an Indian of another Caste permits a Pariar to address him, the wretch is obliged to hold one hand before his mouth, that his breath may not reach him; and if he meets him in a public way, he must turn to avoid him. If an Indian, even of the lowest Caste, by chance touch a Pariar, he is obliged to purify himself by bathing. The Bramins may not look upon them; and as soon as a Pariar sees them, he must retire. They are of no sect, and being excluded from all assemblies of the people, are forbidden to enter the temples to pray or to sacrifice. If they have any work to do in a house, they have a door appropriated to them, and they pass along with their eyes fixed on the ground; for if it were perceived that they had looked into the kitchen, it becomes necessary to break all the utensils in it. An Indian would take merit to himself for saving the life of an insect, a serpent, or any other animal, whilst he would let a Pariar perish, rather than pollute his hand by stretching it out to withdraw him from a precipice *."

Calamitous as is the situation of the Pariar, the

* Sonnerat. Hist. liv. i. ch. 5.

paths which lead to it are innumerable. It is the lot of all those who have even in the slightest manner violated the rules of their Caste; so that there are millions* in Hindostan, who can attest how ill the institution of Castes promotes the *happiness* of a people.

3. Most of those, however, who have defended the institution of Castes, have taken the ground of *policy*. The chief benefits which have been attributed to it, are the *preservation of arts*, by the regular transmission of them from father to son: and the *maintenance of order*, by the confinement of men to one particular line of employment. We shall first attempt an estimate of these supposed advantages, and then point out the evils by which, if they did exist, they would be more than counterbalanced.

In the first place, it is necessary, before the defence of an institution is rested upon its tendency to preserve the arts, to prove that many arts would perish without it. Now this proof, we think, would be difficult, if not impossible. The arts that have decayed are, in general, either such as have depended upon certain local advantages, which advantages have themselves decayed; or

* Sonnerat. Hist. liv. i. ch. 5.

such as have not merited any longer the attention of industry of mankind. But of these, it would have been impossible for the institution of Castes to preserve the first, and mischievous for it to perpetuate the last. It is every day discovered, that the arts which have been attributed to the ancients were either never known, or have not been forgotten; in other words, that *they* executed them worse, or that we execute them better than had been imagined*. There is, indeed, one class of arts, differing from those we have specified, which are subject to vicissitudes. They are such as depend upon the union of genius and skill. Every modern attempt at sculpture, for instance, bears no possible comparision with those relics which the Greeks have left us. But does this arise from any secret of their art having perished with them? This secret, if there be any, is their industry. So discriminating and precise were the rules of the ancient artists, and so careful were they in the application of them, that if any limb of an antique is now discovered, it may instantly be ascertained to what particular statue it belongs. Such arts, however, no institution can perpetuate;

* The improbable notion, for instance, of the ancients having a more durable cement than the moderns, has lately been thus exposed. See Irving's Medical Reports.

nor will any thing restore them but an union of the same talents with the same industry which introduced them.

In order to make this argument of perpetuation of much value, it should also be proved, that the institution of Castes *obliged* every man to commit the secrets of his art to his son. It is indeed probable that he would do this; but then there are few cases in which men do not associate some person in their occupation, to whom they make the same discovery. Or, it should be shewn, that without such an institution the son would not usually follow the profession of the father. Whereas, we know that professions are naturally hereditary; that there are many towns in our own island which never furnish any thing but fishermen, some counties inhabited only by weavers; where the boat and the loom of the father have been the inheritance of the son through sucessive generations. The fondness, indeed, which men retain for their earliest employments; the superior ease which habit produces; the advantages which arise from the practice of those arts in which men excel; all conspire, without force, to fix them in the employments of their ancestors. If these motives ever fail of their influence, it is from one of these two causes; the temptation of greater profits in a different occupation; or a natural distaste to this

particular occupation. But in either of these two cases, it would not be desirable to employ force to confine a man to the employment of his family. For, in the first place, where every channel of trade is filled in proportion to the exigencies of a nation, the profits of all trade will find the same level: so that any rise in the profits of a particular trade indicates a want of hands in that peculiar department. That policy then is surely bad, which would confine the hands of a nation from ministering to her necessities. Again, the value of every individual in a state, is measured by the quantity or quality of the labour he can produce; but either of these will suffer, if the taste of the workman does not go with him to his employment.

To these remarks let it be added, that India itself furnishes the strongest proof, that where other circumstances hasten the decay of the arts, no political institution will save them. Illustrious as she once was in science and in arts, her Bramins cannot now comprehend the processes by which their ancestors calculated an eclipse, or her architects unfold the principles on which a pagoda was erected.

The second great political benefit which has been attributed to the institution of Castes, is the maintenance of good order, by assigning each in-

dividual a fixed place in the state. But it may here, as before, be asked, whether the good order of society is not sufficiently guarded, without any such arbitrary interposition. If so, it is, at the best, the application of a severe medicine to an imaginary disease. Or is it a fact, that a freedom in the choice of professions may be placed among the disturbing causes in the movements of the world? Extremes usually approach each other; and it is observable, that rebellion not only more frequently arises, but assumes a more terrible aspect, under tyrannies, than under milder forms of government. Anarchy presses closely upon the heels of despotism; as air long pent always escapes with the greatest violence.

If, however, it were admitted that the influence of the institution of Castes did in this respect lean towards the side of good order, the frequent and sanguinary feuds which break out, particularly among the subordinate orders, and the unceasing wars of litigation which are carried on by all, counterbalance this advantage*.

Having now considered the supposed advantages of this system, it may be well to state its real and enormous evils.

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* Sonnerat's Voyage aux Indes. liv. i. ch. 5. Rogere, Theatre de l'Idolatrie, part. i. ch. 1.

1. In the first place, this institution has for its foundation, the most extensive and vexatious kind of legalised monopoly. Under this system, the government appropriates the practice and profits of particular employments to families or individuals. This monopoly is not made over to individuals, by way of reward for singular merits; nor is it assigned to bodies of men, who by their united skill, capital, or industry, are alone able to attain the object of the employment; the evil has no mitigation, and therefore, as far as the authorizing unqualified monopoly is impolitic in a government, the institution of Castes is to be condemned. Two circumstances, which always occur in the history of privileged societies, must take place among the Castes. They must follow their employment with less industry and skill, than if others were admitted to a free competition*; and the produce of their labour must bear a higher price in the markets, than either its execution, or its comparative value, can deserve.

2. It betrays great ignorance in politics, to con-

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* Montesquieu refers the same effect to a different cause. "Let none say that every one will succeed better in his profession, when he cannot change it for another; I say that a person will succeed best, when those who have excelled hope to arise to another". Esprit des Loix. liv. xx. ch. 23.

ceive, that the number of individuals in a state engaged in the same employments can be stationary. Among the Hindus, particularly, a people continually agitated by commotions from within, and attacks from without, the proportion of the population called upon to bear arms will perpetually shift. The system of Castes, therefore, which appropriates, under every exigency, the same families to the same employments, is evidently impolitic. The province of Bengal might never have fallen a prey to the arms of Great Britain, if her population had not been principally made up of the pacific tribes.

Besides, in almost every case, war, as it requires men, so also it supplies them, to fill its ranks. In manufacturing countries particularly, it so diminishes the demand for the articles of trade, so hampers the operations of commerce, and so reduces the price of labour, that numbers of manufacturers are thrown out of employ, and are glad to seek it where the demand is now the greatest and pay the best;—in the armies of the state. It is politic to enlist these men, not only because no individual should be left unemployed; or because the government is in want of hands; but because, from their desperate circumstances, they are likely to make the best soldiers, and from their general profligacy they are alone safe under

the rigorous grasp of military discipline. The institution of Castes, however, refuses levies thus raised; and in this manner shuts up, within the bosom of the state, those pestilential vapours which, in their escape, might have destroyed the enemies by whom she was surrounded.

3. The third and last evil which it is necessary to state, is that restraint which the institution of Castes imposes upon the natural bent of the human mind. It matters little to the present question, at what period a bias to particular employments takes possession of the mind. If it is not born with men, it finds them in the earliest stages of life, and accompanies them in triumph through all their journey. The efficacy of this original bias cannot be disputed, when the immortal monuments of it, even among ourselves, are regarded. The state of the sciences and arts in India sufficiently confirms this position. "It must be admitted," says he, who of all men could best decide the question, "that the Asiatics, if compared with our western nations, are mere children in science*." Indeed, the language of science is known to very few among them. In the fine arts their progress is equally small. It is not harsh to call the best

* Sir William Jones.

of their poetry sublime nonsense; and music, sculpture, and painting, are yet in their infancy among them. They want even that acquaintance with the arts which the necessities of men first press upon them. In the works of agriculture, they labour without the assistance of the most common intruments of European husbandry; and one sixth at least of this "paradise of the earth" is a desert*. Of all the rules and instruments of architecture the modern inhabitants of India are ignorant; the larger buildings have an air of gaudy meanness peculiar to them, and the cottages of the poor, without light warmth, or air, seem scarcely formed for human inhabitants†. If, however, the fact did not speak so decisively, the institution of Castes must be condemned on this view of the subject, whilst it is admitted, that "no man was ever great by imitation alone;" that competition is the nurse of excellence; and that the labour of freemen is the cheapest and the best.

Such then are the political institutions, which, for purposes already specified, more particularly claimed our attention. There are some others, which either from their prevailing only partially, or from

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* Baptist Magazine, No. i. 74.

† Tennant's Indian Recreations,

their acknowledged turpitude, we shall merely specify. Among these are the erecting a *koor*, and sitting *in Dhurna*, already mentioned; customs which constitute individuals the judges and avengers of their own causes, and which are therefore incompatible with all principles of sound government. Amongst the customs of the Hindus, must also be placed *infanticide*; a practice which always indicates as much misery as it produces; and is the sanguinary instrument, by which a bad government gets rid of that superfluous population for whom it cannot provide. Another singular circumstance in the polity of the Hindus is, that its laws recognize and regulate the *depredations of robbers**; the magistrate thus sharing in those crimes which he is too weak to prevent. In fact, the Zemindars, in many instances, retain bands of thieves in their own service†.

The mention of robbers leads us to speak of a

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* Halhed. "In particular provinces these public robbers prevail to an incredible extent. The Collaries make nightly excursions in order to rob. They drive away bullocks and sheep, and whatever they can find, for which outrage they annually pay about 750 pagodas, to the rajah. Of this Caste of people, many live in the Tanjore country, still more in Tondiman, and in the Nabob's country." Swartz Letter to Society.

† See Halhed. Tennant, i. 127.

class of men, who are perhaps the greatest depredators upon the public. In every well regulated state, the endeavour of the legislature will be to make every man subsist upon the produce of his own labour. In Hindostan, however, some forms of penance oblige men to subsist by charity; and some provinces swarm with armies of these privileged mendicants*. Their number is indeed frequently such as to enable them to extort the supply they would not otherwise obtain.

The *trial by ordeal*†, that most despicable engine of feudal government, is found in Hindostan. Among the ferocious practices enumerated by Mr. Buchanan, several are instrumental to this method of judicature; of which it is a matter of the greatest astonishment to the present age, that it did not carry its confutation along with it; or that having been tried once, it could afterwards be persisted in.

It is perhaps peculiar to the government of Hindostan, to have a set of *magicians* attached to it by the laws of the country. We learn from the code of Gentoo laws, that "any one ignorant of

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* Institutions of Menu. ch. xi. art. 258. &c. &c.

† See a curious paper on this subject, communicated to the Asiatic society by Mr. Hastings. Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 389.

astrology is liable to punishment, who predicts an unfortunate conclusion to the designs or actions of the monarch." Another peculiarity in Hindostan, is the number of authorised *holidays*. Of these, the Bramins observe annually no less than two hundred. Mr. Buchanan has reasonably insisted upon the powerful resistance which these oppose to civilization. This catalogue may be closed with the mention of one sweeping and destructive principle, which prevails through every department of Hindu or Mahomedan administration; *that money is received in commutation for every crime;* a principle which strikes at the root of all justice, by making it the interest of the magistrate, to cherish those very crimes he is intended to check*.

It is always to be remembered, that the political institutions of Hindostan are interwoven with the religion of the country†; that each pretends to the same divine authority; that the legal, civil, and political regulations, in short, are that portion of the religious system which is intended to preside over the morality of the people, or to guide the conduct of man to man. Every voice of cen-

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* Halhed.

† Preface to Code. This Code pretends to divine authority.

sure therefore, directed against the public institutions of the Hindus, falls ultimately upon their religion.

We must not quit this subject, without more particularly adverting to the civil and political institutions of the Mahomedans in India. It may, however, be enough to say, that with the exception of the institution of Castes, the sitting in Dhurna, and the erecting a Koor, the whole of the customs we have specified also prevail, though in different degrees, among the Mahomedans. Slavery, polygamy, and despotism, exist in their worst forms, and are almost inseparable from their religion. Indeed, it was a part of the policy of this able impostor, to rest the throne upon the same pillars on which the mosque was built. So that, in every attempt to shake the religion of Mahomet, in those countries in which it was established, the ruling powers have continually proved true to its interests; because they found the barriers which it erected the best bulwark of their own depotism.

The comparative influence of Mahomedanism and Christianity upon the political institutions, civil habits, and general happiness of a people, has often been faithfully and forcibly stated*. It has been

* See particularly White's Bampton Lectures. The political benefits of christianity have been clearly displayed in a pamphlet lately published, by an eminent prelate.

incontestibly shewn, that where Mahomedanism has once been introduced, a free government has never survived; that whilst the lower orders are ground by the severity of the laws, the rich escape by their venality; that a spirit of the most ferocious intolerance rages, accompanied by its general effects, an absence of free and rational investigation, a hypocritical profession, a concealed infidelity, an universal national degradation, commotions and suspicions within, hatred and usurpation without*, the decay of science, and the depopulation of the state†; that the public institutions tend in short to inspire indolence, credulity, and licentiousness; to give pride to power, and wretchedness to poverty; to silence wisdom, and to banish the arts. Such are the most prominent features of Mahomedanism, considered in its influence upon the political and civil welfare of a people. If the variety of climate, the peculiarities of a situation where they are all rulers, the collision and communion with another people, may in some degree have, in India, worn down any of the lines of this portrait; still a fresh and no less odious image has

* In 1625 a hundred thousand of the Mewatte tribe were put to death, as a terror to the rest.

† Hist. Generale, Voltaire. ch. 146. Hist. des Juifs, Basnage lib. vii. ch. 21.

been impressed by the same circumstances. It was remarked by Bardesanes the Syrian, that christianity, in whatever country she established herself, without quitting any of her own singularities, sifted the habits and institutions peculiar to that country; and whilst she retained the good, she cast away the bad*. It is certainly true of the religion of Mahomet, that, possibly from its affinity to what was bad, it has never, in foreign countries, incorporated with itself any principles or habits, by which its natural impurities have been softened or corrected.

* Jortin's Remarks. vol. i. p. 357.

CHAPTER IV.

RELIGION OF THE HINDUS.

HAVING now investigated the moral character and the civil and political institutions of the Hindus, we proceed to examine their *religion*. The other discussions, however necessary to the present argument, have been in a degree preparatory to this; as it is the worth of their religion which we are principally endeavouring to estimate. We have lately been contemplating it in its fruits; we shall now learn how to value it in itself.

In the different stages of this investigation, we shall consider in order,

I. The general features of the national religion.

II. The sacred usages attached to it.

III. The principal philosophical opinions which are incorporated with it.

1. The general features of the national religion.---The first prominent feature of the religion that should be pointed out, is its *Polytheism*. Those

of the Bramins, who are sufficiently instructed, to discern the absurdity of such a system, or who wish to advance their reputation or interests, by accommodating their own opinions to those of Europeans, endeavour to explain away their Polytheism. They affirm that inferior deities, or Dewtahs, are worshipped only as attributes of the supreme power, Brihm or Oni, or as agents whom he ordains to govern the petty concerns of the universe. Our business, however, is not with the Creed, which a few philosophic minds may have fashioned from that of the nation, but with the faith which the Bramins always teach, and with that which the whole mass of the people receive*. This latter creed is purely Polytheistic. The highest place in this Eastern Olympus is assigned to

* That the unity of the Godhead is recognised by some, can scarcely be doubted after a perusal of the Bhagvat Geeta. Even here however the doctrine is confused, and there are some passages which can scarcely be reconciled with the admission of it. The author has in his possession a translation of the Yoog Vashiesta, a Shanscrit work, which bears much resemblance to the Bhagvat Geeta in the general spirit of its doctrines, and which it is to be hoped the learned and noble translator will be induced to give to the public. For the proof of the polytheism of the followers of Vyasa, the most enlightened among the Hindus, see Notes to Colebrooke's Essay, Asiatic Researches. 7, 279.

Brahma, Vishnow, and Seva, respectively called the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer of the World. To these are added a host of inferior divinities, who far out-number the demigods of Greece, or the deified animals and vegetables of ancient Egypt. They amount, it is said, to 30 crore*. The bad spirits are perhaps as numerous as those which are good; and receive the same propitiation and worship. It may be well to subjoin some more particular remarks upon the effects of the Polytheistic system, as they display themselves in Hindostan.

Polytheism, it may be premised, supposes some imperfection in each particular divinity. Each deity cannot be esteemed perfect, for there can be only one perfect being. Nor can this distinction be attributed to any one in particular, for this were to rob others of their pretensions to divinity. The manifest tendency of this system, therefore, is to create a degraded notion of God. But when once the doctrine of divine imperfection is let in, the most pernicious consequences follow. And these are sufficiently discernible in Hinduism.

This circumstance, in the first place, accounts for the extraordinary *multiplication of the Gods*;

* A crore is 1,000,000

for if God may be any thing but what is perfect, who shall lay down the rules by which the apotheosis shall be bestowed? Thus it is that evils act and react upon each other. That false opinion which is introduced by Polytheism assists, beyond every thing, to widen and establish its dominion. Hence also it arises that the Hindu Gods are supposed to patronize and to practice every vice. Seva is continually employed in destroying the works of Brahma, and in urging men to the commission of evil. Brahma is the patron of thieves. Vishnow is said to have seduced 16,000 virgins. He who would inflict the most ferocious vengeance, need only propitiate the goddess Kalli. Every criminal, in short, may find his model and patron amidst his country's Gods. The destructive influence of such a scheme upon the morals of a people may easily be conceived. Men usually fall below the standard proposed to them; but in this case they will remain profligate even if they reach it.

In this low notion of the Gods, also, that *peculiar modification of the doctrine of fatalism*, which prevails in Hindostan, may possibly originate. The Hindus conceive not only that the actions and fates of men are predetermined by some invisible power, but that in many cases the Gods themselves are subject to the same controul. We shall after-

wards make some observations upon the doctrine itself, and its consequences. It may be sufficient to remark here, that if the doctrine found a place in the Hindu creed, it might be expected to take this particular form. If the imperfection of the Gods be admitted, something must be supposed superior to them. This can be no *Being*, for he would be the real God. This "great first cause" must then be sought for, in some incontrolable unintelligible power. And such is the Destiny of the Hindus*.

We would here ask, if as among ourselves, men pay only a qualified and unwilling obedience to a Being whose power they admit to be uncontrolable and infinite, what homage are the Hindus likely to render to Gods, who are only the subjects of such a power?

The second general feature which may be pointed out in the religion of Hindostan, is its *Idolatry*.

Idolatry is the natural attendant upon polytheism; because, as we have seen, it is the property of this scheme to elevate inferior beings to the rank of Gods: and men are likely to retain the image of those whom they themselves have deified.

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* Baghvat Geeta, pp. 59, 116, 120 130. Sacontala, act 6.

When a single image is thus introduced into the temple, the introduction of others may be expected. Men naturally covet a link between themselves and an invisible being, and would anxiously employ the first precedent to multiply those images which seemed to supply it. From carving the shapes of those objects and beings with which they were familiar, they would proceed to give a form to such deities, as their priests or their imaginations suggested to them. Hence the 'Gorgons, hydras, and chimeras dire,' the nameless monsters of wood and stone, which people the caves of Elephanta, and the temples of Hindostan.

The apologists for Hinduism, like the friends of a similar superstition, have pleaded that these images are not erected as objects of adoration, but as helps to it. But we have it upon the authority of Vishnow himself, that the great mass of the people 'believe him to exist within the visible form under which they see him*.' And the experience of human nature authorizes us to pronounce that even this statement is too favorable; and that the God, in this instance, appropriates to himself many sacrifices, which were meant for the Idol, and were devoured by the priests †.

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* Bhagvat Geeta. p. 71.

† A singular passage on this subject is found in a trans-

2. The next subject of our examination shall be *the sacred usages of the Hindus.*

All false religions seem to labour under that deficiency in their scheme, which is supplied in Christianity by the vicarious sacrifice of its author for the sins of men. In default of such a propitiation, Hinduism, like other superstitions, makes use of weapons of human temper, to disarm the wrath of God. They either employ *penances*, which suppose that man may be better at some given period than he needs be, and that the sufferings of one moment may atone for the sins of another; or they offer *sacrifices*, in the belief that the involuntary sufferings of another animal, are sufficient expiations of the guilt of man.

We shall speak first of the *penances* of the Hindus;—confining the term to labor or sufferings voluntarily incurred to atone for sins.

Penances are practised in a variety of manners. They sometimes consist in laborious journeys to remote spots which are esteemed sacred. There

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lation from the Shanscrit by Mr. Wilkins. "The same reward may be obtained, from the sight of an image, or from the worship of an image, as may be derived from the immediate visitation of a Deity." Asiatic Researches. vol. i. p. 251.

are many cities*, rivers†, and even whole provinces‡, thus consecrated. Sometimes journeys are performed with a view of presenting gifts to the Bramins of these particular districts. Sometimes whole provinces are drained to attend a particular feast. At Jaggernaut multitudes cast themselves under the wheels of a machine in which their Idol is borne. Some seek for forgiveness by dying in an assigned spot. Many are plunged into the Ganges in certain hope that the holy waves will cleanse them from the most heinous offences.

Another species of penance consists in the performance of the most childish and disgusting ceremonies. The criminal is in some cases to "sit in a coarse vesture of hair from a cow's tail, putting out the flag of a tavern keeper;" or "to drink, boiling hot until he die, the urine of a cow, or pure water, or juice expressed from cow dung." In others he needs only name the sacred places, or call over the titles of the Gods. On some occasions the process is infinitely tedious and absurd. In short, it would cost a Bramin one life to learn

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* Particularly Benares.

† The Ganges, more especially.

‡ Such are the territories of Oude and Cashmere.

thoroughly the ceremonies which he would need another to practise*.

A third species of penance consists in the infliction of the most frightful bodily torments. The devotee of this kind, or Yogi, consigns himself to a bed of spikes; or embraces a red hot figure; or holds the arms for many years in the same position; or measures the distance of places by his own length; or invites the white ants to make their nests in his body; or fixes his eyes unceasingly upon the sun; or swings upon a hook thrust through the integuments of the back.

It ought not be omitted, that when the avarice of the people is proof against the sanctity of these Yogis, they extort the charity by which they live. They travel about in bands, and are sometimes so formidable from their numbers and insubordination, that it is necessary to call in military force to reduce them to good order. They claim extraordinary privileges with the women; so that husbands have no right to intrude upon them when introduced into the chamber of their wives.

On the Hindu system of penance, it is important to remark generally, that by assigning the

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* See the Institutions of Menu. ch. ii. Rogere, Cerem. Relig. 6—190. Sonnerat 1—127.

same penance to crimes of a very different rank, and by the ordinary disproportion of the atonement to the offence, it of necessity establishes a false standard of guilt.

It is a circumstance also in this system, still more fatal to morals, that there is no crime, nor any number of crimes, which are not expiable by penance. Hence the perpetrators of the greatest villainies, by undergoing the prescribed penance, regain the same rank and estimation which they had forfeited; and hence the life of many consists of alternations of vice and atonement, one day always reproducing that crime which was expiated the day before.

The rules of *sacrifice* are not less various, less mischievous, or less absurd*, than those of penance. These sacrifices are sometimes offered to Gods deformed by foul, profligate, and obscene attributes; sometimes to the most contemptible reptiles. They are often of such extent as to exhaust the means of subsistence, and to force the penitent upon a life of vagrancy, uselessness, and mendicity. The rites by which they are accompanied are generally either sanguinary or ob-

* The following passage on sacrifices is extracted from a work which contains by far the most favourable display of Hinduism, of any document in the possession of Europeans.

scene. The gifts themselves center ultimately with the Bramins, and furnish them with fresh materials of indulgence, and stronger instruments of oppression*.

We have already particularized (page 36) many of the most remarkable sacrifices. We then observed that three of these were at least sanctioned and applauded, if not insisted upon, in the sacred books. *Voluntary devotement after a variety of methods; the immersion of the sick, or dying, in the Ganges;* and *the burning or burying of Widows.*

As to the first of these practices, it has long been settled upon indisputable grounds, that man has no right to lay down his life when he will, or to desert the post where God has placed him.

Nor does it admit of a better defence, that men should, as in the second of these usages, accelerate the death of each other.

"Some there are who sacrifice their breathing spirit, and force it downwards from its natural course, whilst others force the spirit that is below, back with the breath. Such worshippers are by their particular modes of worship purified from their offences." Bhagvat Geeta. 55.

* Institutions of Menu. Rogere. Tennant. Bernier, 2. 121. Bhagvat Geeta, p. 46.

The third practice has long distinguished the followers of Brahma from every other people, and is too curious to be passed over without some additional remarks. The origin of this barbarous custom is still unknown. It has been considered by some only as an accidental modification of that tyranny which, among every people who have not listened to the mild voice of Christianity, is exercised by the stronger over the weaker sex. Others have represented it as a contrivance to secure the male against the conspiracies of the females,—wives, and concubines, who are imprisoned in the Zenana*.

But it is of less importance, as a practical question, to discuss the origin of this savage custom, than the necessity under which the victims lie to submit to it. The champions for Hinduism have contended, that this sacrifice is always voluntary. This question has been already noticed (page 37). But it may be further asked, whether, although there are solitary instances, in every age and climate, of wives refusing life when the partner of it was taken away, such a principle would be likely to operate, under an establishment which sanctioned a plurality of wives; or whether it would carry

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* The seraglio of the Hindus.

30,000 females annually, in Hindostan, to the funeral pile*.

The *fact* also ill supports the notion of this immolation being voluntary. There are on record a multitude of cases, in which the victims have been forced upon the fire. A law exists which permits the relatives of the widow, or even strangers of the lowest Caste, to bear her back to the pile if she deserts it. She is frequently fastened upon it. "In the province of Orissa, when the wife of a man of rank burns, all his concubines must burn with her. In the event of their refusal they are dragged forcibly to the place, and pushed with bamboos into the flaming pit†." Where force is not employed, the obligation is still such as by no means to leave the will at liberty. The wretched widow is taught by the divine books, that her burning atones for all the sins of her husband‡; that dying thus she shall dwell with him in Paradise, for three millions and a half of years §; that if she survives him, she must

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* This number appears great, but the calculations usually entered into upon this subject support it. The number in the province of Bengal alone, has been estimated at 15,000; that within thirty miles of Calcutta, in 1803, was 275.

† Buchanan's Essay, p. 104.

‡ Vishnow Pooran Shaster. § Gentoo Code.

not marry, or wear any ornament, but remain infamous and imprisoned in her habitation*.

On the subject of sacrifices, it may be remarked, that even the immolation of human victims is not unknown in Hindostan†. Some of their human sacrifices do not appear to be ordained in the Vedas; but several are sanctioned, and none are forbidden; rules are furnished for the rites by which they are to be accompanied, and no principle is laid down which tends to their exclusion. If they are not universal, therefore, it does not appear to be the fault of the religion; and as it is not changed, if the priests have sufficient power, or the people enough faith, there is no reason why these bloody rites should not again deluge the temples of Hindostan.

One other peculiarity may be pointed out in the sacrifices of Hindostan‡. Men are commanded to offer them for the sins of their ancestors; and the

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* The sanction afforded by the Vedas to this practice, is collected by Mr. Colebrooke. Asiatic Researches, iv. 209.

† In the fifth vol. of the Asiatic Researches is found Rudhira dhyara, or "sanguinary chapter," translated from one of the Puranas by Mr. Blaguire, which contains general instructions on the subject of human sacrifice, and other sacrifice.

‡ Notes to the Bhagvat Geeta.

omission of some rites, and the practice of others, ensure the safety or condemnation of those who have themselves quitted a state of probation.

Of these rites then, it surely is not too much to affirm, that they are exceeded in folly or ferocity by none to which paganism has given birth.

The *symbols* of Hinduism will next claim some short observations. These are mentioned only to animadvert upon those features of filth and obscenity, by which they are almost universally characterized. The licentious exploits of the Gods, are perpetuated in the grossest devices, which are hung around their temples. The most impure conceptions of the coarsest sensuality, are preserved in innumerable images. These are carried in processions, erected in the cells of private devotion, or worn in the form of trinkets, as ornaments of the person.

3. It remains still to examine those *philosophical opinions*, which are associated with the religion.

1. The doctrine of *fatalism* has already been mentioned as established among the Hindus. It is known also to be a governing principle of the Mahomedans. Philosophers have differed as to the *origin* which should be assigned to this doctrine. Montesquieu*, in order to make good his

* Esprit des Loix. liv. 24, ch. 14.

darling theory, and derive it originally from 'Climate' has attributed this doctrine to indolence, as its proximate cause. This opinion would have been less questionable, if it had been found in every case to vary with the circles of latitude. Perhaps, however, this great man erred only in assigning it to one cause, instead of many. This doctrine has probably for its principal source, the presumption of man, who, when he cannot reconcile the prescience of God with his own free agency, determines, either that man is forcibly controled by God, or that he is utterly independant of him. It in part, also, owes its prevalence in Hindostan to that accommodation which a false religion always displays to the besetting vices of its worshippers *; and is a kind apology, which the Bramin barters with his flock for more costly gifts. It has a third source in another tenet of Hinduism, which is soon to be examined. The doctrine of *transmigration*, supposes that the evil dispositions and sufferings of men, in this state of being, are the punishment of crimes committed in a former; and that under this view it would be impossible, and almost criminal to resist them.

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* In this sense the remark of Montesquieu appears to be just.

That the Hindus are almost universally fatalists, will not be questioned by those who are at all acquainted with them. The extent to which they are so, may be determined from the following extract. Chrishna the incarnate deity thus instructs his followers. "Those who are born under the influence of an evil destiny, know not what it is to proceed in virtue, or to recede from vice. They are born of dreadful and inhuman deeds, for the destruction of the world*." If such is the principle of fatalism, every evil may be expected to rush in at the avenue by which it enters. The Eastern hemisphere may accordingly be considered as the 'darkened stage' upon which its tragedies have been performed. If the controlling power is called fate or destiny, then, as has been shown, all sins have their apology, and the religion becomes little better than Atheism.

It might indeed, at first sight, be conceived that fatalism has the same tendency to elevate, as to degrade a nation; that as many would imagine themselves predestined to good and great actions, as to their opposites. But this opinion is warranted neither by *philosophy*, nor by *fact*. In the first place, in its fallen state, the human mind

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* Bhagvat Geeta. p. 116.

has more bias to vice than to virtue. But the fatalist conceives himself obliged to pursue his natural bias; and this mischievous preponderance will therefore be encreased in him. Again, the tenet of fatalism is likely to have more influence upon feeble, than upon vigorous minds. These last feel their freedom, whilst the first may reasonably suspect it. Fatalism, therefore, will fill the timid with dismay, and the dejected with despondency; it will render the mean slavish, and the inactive slothful; but it will add little to courage, hope, independance, or activity. "Du dogme de la predestination (says Montesquieu) nait la paresse de l'ame*;" but no philosopher ever assigned industry to the same parent. To pass from theory to *fact*, it is sufficient to state that there is no instance of the prosperity of a country long surviving the introduction of this dogma to its people. There are instances indeed, where great monarchs have struck out from their people extraordinary energies, by persuading them they were predestined to conquer; but when this phrenzy subsided, and the principle was left to its natural operation, the lethargy returned with encreased strength, and "the last state of that people, has become worse than the first."

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* Esprit des Loix, liv. 24. ch. 14.

Every false system of religion, indeed, must contain in it the elements of its own dissolution; and such is fatalism to every system with which it is incorporated. Under its pernicious shade, India has stretched herself for ages, slothful, pusillanimous, and sensual. And the Turk, under the influence of the same principle, deems it impious to apply preventives or remedies to that pestilence, which he conceives fated to destroy him: or to raise any bulwark against an enemy whom he imagines predestined to conquer*.

2. The doctrine of *transmigration* has already been mentioned, as a tenet of the Hindus.

This doctrine, which teaches that man, when his human form moulders into dust, migrates through the bodies of different animals; or that he arrives at the state of man, only by various such migrations; is one of the most singular hypotheses by which the pages of philosophy are diversified. It sprung probably, in great measure, from the difficulty of admitting that "the same animal should

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* See Eton's View of the Turkish Empire. This author considers the prevalence of fatalism as the principal of five causes, which have produced the downfal of Turkey. It is a current opinion with the Turks, that they are destined to be the subjects of some Northern Empire.

be innocent, should suffer, and should perish*." Benevolence to animals may also in some degree have prompted the contrivers of it, although the disciples of Pythagoras imagined that the scene of our next migration might be a vegetable; and the Hindus, however criminal they esteem the butchering of a cow, do not hesitate cruelly to beat or starve it; and, however cautious of crushing an insect, shed human blood in sacrifice or in revenge, at the bar of justice, or in the field of battle, without any scruple or compunction. A probable origin for this notion, as it concerns Hinduism, may however be discovered in the local circumstances of the country. Hindostan is consumed by excessive heat; the natives breed but few cattle, and they are always likely to be wanted for tillage; their black cattle do not breed freely, and are subject to numerous disorders†. The scarcity of flesh therefore, and the abundance of their vegetable crops, sufficiently explain every institution which tends to the preservation of animal life. It was on a similar principle, the Athenians were not encouraged to sacrifice animals, as their territory did not easily rear them; and the Mahomedans

* Jortin's Discourses.

† Bernier's Travels, ii. p. 1. &c. Lettres Edifs. Col. xii, p. 95.

forbidden to eat swine, as it is a food both costly and pernicious in the East*.

As to the tendency of this doctrine, it is upon the whole indisputably bad. One consequence has already been pointed out, (page 97,) that it tends to establish the dogma of fatalism. It also leads to indistinct and degrading views of the retribution of futurity; destroys the notion of personal identity, or of consciousness in that state; and thus disarms the moral government of God of its principal weapon.

Nor is it less absurd than it is pernicious. Upon the Brahminical hypothesis, the destruction of life is always punished, by a descent to the lowest of eighty-nine states of being. How then shall those animals ever reach a higher stage, whom nature plainly appoints to feed upon other animals? How shall man ascend in the scale of being, when every step he takes is red with slaughter; and every breath he draws perhaps annihilates a flight of "those moats which people the sun beams."

3. The only remaining philosophical opinion which we shall particularly notice, is that of *immaterialism*.

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* Montesquieu's Esprit des Loix, liv. 24, circa fin.

It appears that the six schools of Hindu philosophy, correspond with those of Greece; but those which embrace the greatest number of followers, are the schools of Vyasa and Gautama, the Plato and Aristotle of India. These teachers are exactly opposed to each other. Vyasa has before been mentioned, as the principal interpreter of the sacred writings, and the chief poet and philosopher of the nation. His system is esteemed the most orthodox, and numbers among its disciples far the greater portion of those Hindus who pretend to philosophy. The lowest orders also are familiar with the application of some of its principles. This system answers to that of the Idealists, among ourselves, and is fairly chargeable with all the consequences deduced from it by its European patrons. As stated by Vyasa himself, it teaches that the material world exists only in the perceptions of men; in short, that "existence and perceptibility are convertible terms; that external appearances and sensations are illusory, and would vanish into nothing if the divine energy, which alone sustains them, were suspended but for a moment*." Now although we should admit, with the distinguished writer from whom this statement is

* Sir William Jones' Works, vol. i. p. 361.

taken, that a system built upon such exalted notions of the Deity, can scarcely deserve the title of 'impious;' still we think it obviously tends to the destruction of all piety. In the first place, if because we cannot prove the existence of the material world, we are not to believe that it exists, but are to reject the evidence of our senses, and the general conviction of mankind, we must also reject all the evidence by which the truths essential to morals or justice are established. There is only one fact, viz. our own existence, of which we have better evidence than of the existence of matter; so that if we doubt whether matter exists, we may doubt every thing else. Universal scepticism is therefore the first fruit of the philosophy which annihilates matter.

Again, this philosophy, as taught in the Vedanti school, supposes man himself without existence, except as an integral part of the Deity. Man acts only as God acts. According to this system therefore, all sin is the act of God, and all responsibility is removed from man.

Vyasa teaches also that all matter and mind, or rather those images which we distinguish by these titles, shall finally be absorbed in the Deity. This doctrine therefore, as we have before remarked of another, has a tendency to destroy every notion of personal identity, and of consciousness

in a future state; and to substitute for the terrors of retributive justice, a general and indiscriminating expectation of participating in all the happiness and glories of the Godhead.

With the investigation of this doctrine we close our examination of the religion of Hindostan. We shall plead the privilege we claimed as to Mahomedanism, instead of entering upon any investigation of it. Its impostures and absurdities are already well known to Europeans. It is superior to Hinduism in holding as a primary tenet, the unity of the Godhead. Of the three philosophical opinions we have considered, it sanctions only the first. Its penances, however, are not less numerous, and scarcely less extravagant; and in its tendency to rouse and glut all the most ferocious passions, and the coarsest appetites of man*, it may confidently challenge any of the worst forms of Paganism.

After this exposition of Hinduism, considered as to its peculiar tenets and usages, its operations in the state, and its influence upon the moral character, we resume the main line of our argument where we quitted it. With renewed confidence we now ask, whether the duty of propagating

* An exception should be made in favour of Drunkenness.

Christianity in India, may not safely be rested upon the absolute need under which her people labour of a purer religion? If it be true, that the general character of the inhabitants of India is marked by the features of 'treachery, indolence, and cruelty;' if her civil and political institutions are inefficient, tyrannical, and immoral; if her Religion at once forms this character, creates these institutions, and in itself exhibits a mass of imposture, superstition, and absurdity;—then "the whole head" of such a country "is sick," "and the whole heart faint," and she cries aloud for all the help which the hand of mercy can bestow. It requires no additional proof to shew that the character of the people, and the institutions of the country, are so blended with the Religion, that any attempt to change the one, without changing the other, would be fruitless. As needless would it be to prove, that the cure for evils of such magnitude and inveteracy must be the introduction of new moral principles. Justice and benevolence in this case demand of us the use of every means for the subversion, not only of existing institutions, but of the moral system in which they originate. In such an attempt, it would be wild to oppose acts to principles, and to aim at changing the heart by municipal regulations. But if we had no moral object,

and proposed to let the virtue of the people shift for itself provided we could reform their manners, we must come to the same conclusion. Corrupt manners indicate a diseased habit. Any attempt therefore to change them, may drive in the disease, or give it different and perhaps worse symptoms, but can never expel it. Cut off one head of the monster, and another will appear. Christianity herself, though she aimed at universal civilization, yet never meddled with existing institutions. She gives principles, with the assurance that laws will grow out of them, and that, if men once desire or deserve instruction, they will not long remain without it.—Admitting the truth of these observations, what has been before said will probably be deemed sufficient to shew, that of all moral systems, Christianity alone supplies what India manifestly needs,—sound first principles; pure morals; an ample basis for equal laws, and benevolent institutions.

The elegant historian of that peninsula, who in his last work, * sketches the portrait of the Hindu in colors to the full as dark as those we have em-

* Orme's Historical Fragments. It is highly favourable to the view we have taken of the Hindus, that Mr. Orme, at that point of time in which he knew them best, gives them the worst character.

ployed, considers Christianity as the proper instrument to soften down, and polish their national features. "Christianity," says he, "vindicates all its glories, all its honors, all its reverence, when we behold the most horrid impieties avowed among the nations on whom its influence does not shine, as actions necessary in the common conduct of life; I mean poisonings, treachery, and assassination, in the sons of ambition: rapines, cruelty, and extortions in the ministers of justice,"

It may still however be objected, that we have proved too much, and that if this wretched country is indeed a prey to evils of such a bulk and complexion, *no adequate* remedy can be found for them. Let such objectors however remember, that Christianity is in the strictest sense, an adequate remedy; for could we conceive its principles universally recognised and acted upon in India, *not one of these evils would remain.*—Whilst Hindusim maintains her seat in India, the more devout her people are, the more deformed will be their character, the more enslaved their situations, the more dark and hideous their superstition. If, on the contrary, the depravity, oppression, superstition of the Hindus survive the introduction of Christianity; it can be only because they have no devotion. Hinduism, in short, is the founder, the patron, and the ally of those evils, of which Christianity will be the implacable enemy.

Shall we then, as a nation of Christians, see the disease of this people, know the remedy, and yet withhold it? This indeed would be to give an unequivocal proof, that Christianity may be professed in a country which is neither good nor great, But then it is but a bare profession of her principles which can coexist with such inhumanity and injustice. We hope better things of our country. She will display to surrounding nations the commanding influence of her Religion. She will by her benevolence furnish India with one standing miracle to attest its truth. She will shew that she has no higher sense of "duty," than that built upon the plain command of God, to give to them that *need.*

PART II.

ON THE "MEANS" OF DIFFUSING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE IN ASIA.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE OBSTACLES AND FACILITIES ATTACHED TO THE DESIGN OF INTRODUCING CHRISTIANITY INTO INDIA.

THE point of 'duty,' abstractedly considered, being established, our next subject of enquiry will naturally be, in the first place, whether there be *any* means by which this design may be accomplished? And secondly, *what* are the best means of accomplishing it? It is the design of the following chapters to answer these two questions.

As it has been sometimes contended, that the diffusion of Christianity in Asia is impracticable, it may be right to consider, as well the peculiar impediments, as the facilities attached to the prosecution of this design.

The case of India will be found in some degree

to differ from that of every other country, where an attempt has been made to introduce Christianity. But we think it fully possible to prove, that the facilities balance the difficulties; and that the superstitions and vices of the Hindus, are by no means so deeply entrenched as to resist an attack conducted with skill, vigor, and piety.

It will not be necessary here, to enter into any investigation of those obstacles to the introduction of Christian knowledge into India, which are common to this attempt with all others, to establish it in pagan and unconverted countries. Such an obstacle is the universal corruption of the heart of man; that depravation by which he naturally hates what he ought to love; and that infirmity through which, "when he would do good, evil is present with him." Such obstacles also are those which the general influence of all reigning superstitions presents to a religion pure, spiritual, and holy. To contend that these, and such as these, are insuperable bars to the diffusion of Christianity, would be to contend that the friends of this religion must never expect her to gain a foot of territory of which she is not already in possession. It would be to invalidate all the prophecies, and all the promises of God. It would be to controvert the great and impressive fact, that multitudes who once "sat in darkness," have seen and hailed

"the sun of righteousness," as it arose upon them "with healing in its wings."

We shall now consider, in order, some of the peculiar obstacles which have been pointed out, to the diffusion of Christian knowledge in India.

1. The first great obstacle which has been held up as a beacon, to warn us from any attempt to diffuse Christian knowledge in India, is the *opposition of the Bramins.*

It is not certainly to be expected that the Bramins will welcome a religion, which can be established only upon the ruins of their own superstition; and which will rob themselves of nearly as much honour as their Gods. But although something is to be apprehended from their opposition, still a little consideration will prove, that like objects seen through a mist, it has been magnified by the obscurity of the medium through which it has been contemplated. For first, let it be enquired, whether the end of diffusing Christianity may not be carried, without violently rousing the opposition of the Bramins; and secondly, whether, if roused, it will be such as to justify us in despairing of success.

The first of these enquiries will be most easily satisfied, by examining the grounds of disquietude and resistance, which the plan of diffusing Christianity is likely to afford to the Bramins.

Subjects of a free empire, members of a Protestant Church, the people of an enlightened age, *we, of course, cannot for a moment dream of propagating Christianity in India by force.* If indeed a man be at liberty to choose any thing, we well know, it must be his Religion; because, without it is chosen, the best Religion can be of no use to him. The preacher of the Gospel will be the rational advocate of a rational Religion, and will use no weapon which his master would have commanded him "to put up." Now if persuasion is the strongest instrument to which we resort, it is difficult to discover how the animosity of the Bramins will be excited; or at least, so excited as to shew itself in acts of open hostility. Let the improbability of this be considered. In the first place, to oppose violence to persuasion would at once be to betray the weakness of their cause. Such a proceeding also would be to violate that sweeping principle of toleration by which they pronounce, "God to be delighted with every variety in Religion." Such a line of policy, moreover, is not likely to be adopted by persons who are not the sovereigns of a country, and as such tolerate others, but who are the subjects of it, and themselves tolerated. Men are always most disposed to wink at attacks upon their privileges, when they are least able to revenge them.

Let us next consider the nature of that opposition by which the Bramins will endeavour to resist the advances of Christianity. Such as are real believers in the dispensation of Brahma, will oppose system to system, Hinduism to Christianity. But can Christians desire any thing better? Is it not a quality of truth to conquer in every fair contest? Does not error maintain herself by the reputation of forces in concealment, and at once betray her weakness by coming into the field? Is our Religion worth propagating if she shrink from the bar of justice, and does not invoke the impanelled world as a jury? Others of the Bramins, possessed of less candour, may possibly attempt by violent measures to check the progress of Religion. Of these, however, it will be the business of the state to bind the hands, and prescribe to them those measures of toleration, by which the British are guided in their conduct to them.

There is indeed a more formidable engine, which those will employ who are either believers in the expediency, rather than in the truth of their system; or who, upon any grounds, are determined to prevent all apostacy from it. There is no punishment which a Hindu more trembles to suffer, or which a Bramin can more easily inflict, than a "*loss of Caste.*" As the power of admi-

nistering this punishment is lodged by the religion in the hands of the priest, the attempt to curb it, in a government which proceeds upon principles of complete toleration, would scarcely be consistent; and as it is opinion only, which at all constitutes it a punishment, every such attempt would certainly be unavailing. A few considerations however will prove, that both theory and fact justify us in believing, that the efficacy of this means of opposition has been overrated. For let the nature of its operation be examined.—The loss of Caste becomes a punishment to the Hindu, in one of these two manners. It is either self-inflicted, through his own superstitious veneration for the distinction of Caste; or it is inflicted by his countrymen, who endeavour to make him a sacrifice to their veneration for these distinctions*. Now, in the first of these cases, the loss of Caste will cease to operate as an evil, by the conversion of the individual to Christianity. With his apostacy from Hinduism all veneration for its institutions will decay. As to the second, it has been in a degree, and it ought to be more the task of Englishmen, to mitigate the burthen of it. English society

* The Baptist Missionaries experienced some distress from the village barbers refusing to shave the heads of those Hindus who proposed to be baptised. Bapt. Miss. Accounts for 1803, p. 372.

and patronage, afford the natural place of refuge to those who have adopted English principles. Many converted Hindus have even now been satisfied with the protection which the Missionaries (themselves poor and dependant) have been able to afford them. Upon a plan hereafter to be proposed, this protection may be indefinitely extended; and when, instead of the slight covering of individual good will, they are sheltered by the ample wing of government, this formidable obstacle will almost be done away.

The next obstacle to the diffusion of Christian knowledge in India, which we would examine, is that *obstinacy with which the Hindus are said to adhere to every custom or principle they have once adopted.* Such is their hatred of change, it is said, that a picture of modern Hindostan would not materially differ from that taken in the time of Alexander. If this objection cannot be disproved, still its force may be materially diminished, by the statement of some notorious facts.

It is true that many of the peculiarities assigned by the earliest historians to India, still prevail with little variety of appearance. But is it not also true, that all countries where the degree of civilization, during an assigned period, does not considerably vary, will exhibit nearly the same face at the opening and conclusion of this period?

However great, besides, is the attachment of the Hindus to existing modes and institutions, still it is not by any means such as to resist all innovation and improvement. It was, in the opinion of the sage Catharine, more difficult to change the *dress* of a nation, than to introduce a new principle of government. The change of dress, indeed, is said to have cost Gustavus III. the affections of his people. The Indians, however, in compliance with the will, or in imitation of the manners of the Mahomedans, have in some measure substituted the dress of their conquerors for their own *. There is some reason also to believe, that the *seclusion of the women* from the society of the males is not an original custom, but borrowed from the Mahomedans †. Besides this, there is a growing conformity of customs to those of Europe, discernible among them. That their *Religion* does not, any more than their popular opinions and habits, absolutely resist change and improvement, is clear from the following circumstances. In the first place, there is considerable reason to believe that the Religion of Bud-

* Robertson's Disquisition on India, p. 416.

† Id. p. 417.

dha, even as late as the twelfth century of the Christian æra, prevailed in many parts of India, which have been since converted to Hinduism*. This fact, at least, seems to be little dubious, that some of the nations, the Ceylonese, for instance, who now worship Buddha, were once worshippers of the same god with the Indians. Hence one of these two consequences follow; either that the present Hindus are themselves seceders from the original religion; or that many of the ancient Hindus have changed their faith for that of Buddha. Either of these hypotheses, however, serve to lower our estimate of Hindu pertinacity. But whatever may have been the faith of this people 1800 years ago, there is unquestionable evidence, that since that period a multitude have apostatized from it. There are at this time 150,000 *Christians on the coast of Malabar*; members of a church which has subsisted from the earliest ages of our Religion†. Many of them prove their Hindu original, by their adherence to habits which prevail among the Bramins. But if local cir-

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* Essay on the ruins of Mavalipuram. Asiatic Researches vol. i. p. 145.

† Geddes Hist. of Malabar. La Croze. Hist. du Chr. des Indes. Asiatic Researches, vol. vii. We cannot decisively place this Church at an earlier period than the fifth century.

cumstances have thus in some degree changed the outward face of our Religion, none of its vital parts are sacrificed. There is perhaps no example of a Church more pure, simple, and apostolic. A late traveller* speaks with feeling, of the high interest excited by the view of this evangelized country. How indeed must the eye, weary with the scenes of Hindu superstition and absurdity, be refreshed by the prospect of "snow white churches bursting from amidst the thick leaved trees," upon the shores of Malabar. The number of these converts, and the firmness with which they have resisted the intrigues of the Bramins, the assaults of the Mahomedans, and the dangerous patronage of the see of Rome, prove that Hinduism is not the only Religion congenial to Hindus, and that their character is susceptible of all the shades between the extreme points of light and darkness.

Another great class of sectarists from Hinduism are the *Seiks*. Their secession appears to have taken place about four centuries since†.—This system differs essentially from that of Brahma; it denies the authority of the Vedas or sacred books; substitutes in their place, the institutes of its

* Bartolomea. p. 246.

† Asiatic Researches, vol. i, p. 289.

founder, and vigilantly guards against every approach to idolatry. Upon the whole, it is a bold and (unassisted by Revelation) an honorable innovation upon the principles and practices of the ancient superstition.

Mr. Buchanan has enumerated five other sects* among the Hindus, who have not only abandoned the worship or Brahma, but displayed some anxiety to become acquainted with Christianity.

The inference from these different facts is, not only that in the Hindus the hatred of change, if great, is not invincible, but, that they are to the full as susceptible of a better variety of opinion and character, as of a worse. Every peculiarity in the history of a nation, may be traced back to some constitutional peculiarity in the individuals who compose it. But as perhaps the strongest lines by which the Hindu character is marked are those of indolence and passiveness, it is fair to refer the permanence of their institutions, in some degree, to the operation of these qualities. Men of such a character easily receive an impression,

* Memoir, p. 167. The Baptist Missionaries give an interesting account of the applications to them, from different classes of sectarists. Bapt. Missionaries Account for 1803, p. 351.

and like bodies of which the vis inertiæ is great, resist change, because change is motion. But then they will retain this impression only till some greater force stamp them with another. This also may be the case with the Hindus. Can it be said, that any means have been employed to communicate Christianity to them commensurate to those which, in all probability, were at first employed to teach them Hinduism? Has truth indeed, at any time, met falsehood with equal forces on the plains of Hindostan? To suppose that the Hindus could now be acquainted with Christianity, would be to suppose them not only a people fond of change, but that, like the Athenians, "they spent their time in nothing else, but to hear, or tell some new thing." Bring up the instruments of our spiritual warfare, and it will then be soon enough to declare, that their pertinacious adherence to pre-established institutions, erects a barrier which neither reason nor Christianity can cast down.

Another obstacle to the diffusion of Christianity peculiar to Hindostan, has been stated to be, that "*indifference*" by which its natives are characterized.

It will be seen hereafter, that if all the required weight were allowed to this obstacle, still the character of the Hindus furnishes them with some

qualities as subjects for instruction, which fully counterbalance their acknowledged 'indifference'. With regard to the quality itself, it may be observed in the first place, that those are scarcely consistent with themselves, who at one moment charge the Hindus with obstinate adherence to pre-established rites and institutions, and then with absolute indifference to every rite and institution*. In the same individual these qualities can scarcely co-exist. Again,—as the quality of indifference is rather of a negative kind; as it will shew itself to the full as much in want of zeal for the ancient religion, as by any disaffection to the new; and as thus, though it impoverishes the system, it yet cleanses it, we are surprised to see it obtruded as one of those obstacles, on account of which the apostle of Christianity is taught to despair of success. It may be observed in addition, that there is a way in which the indifference of the Hindus may be turned to some account. The zealous Idolater will not abandon his religion till he receives full evidence of the truth of another. The character strongly

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* "They hear the divine authority of the sacred books questioned with patience and moderation, at all times, and in all places." Bapt. Miss. i. 19.

marked by 'indifference,' on the contrary, will scarcely take the trouble to examine the evidence of either, but will embrace that to which at first sight he discovers the least objection. Now as an acute writer has observed, it is far more easy to prove "that religion ought to humanize the manners of men, than that any particular religion is true*." Or in other words, it is easier to convince a mere looker on, that Hinduism is a spurious religion, that to demonstrate the truth of Christianity. The 'indifferent' Hindu, therefore, will be likely to embrace the last, because he finds it beset with fewest objections. But it will be said,—"if his indifference survives, his change of faith will be useless." We answer,—change his faith, and you give a death blow to his indifference. The doctrine of fatalism is the foundation of this indifference, and Christianity, by touching this key-stone, will bring the whole edifice to the ground.

Another serious obstacle to the diffusion of Christianity has been stated to be, the "conduct of European Christians in the East." Whatever class of nominal Christians is taken into consideration, it is certainly probable that they have not

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* Montesquieu's Esprit des Loix. Liv, 24. ch. 4.

very much adorned the doctrine they profess. The Roman Catholics in the East, have, as elsewhere, diluted their religious and moral principles, to suit the corrupt palates of the natives, and then have made the reception of them a matter of sanguinary compulsion.

The lower class of Portugueze Catholics in Bengal, who are the descendants of the Portugueze soldiers, and women of the lowest Indian Castes, would in general dishonour any Church of which they called themselves members. Our own countrymen also, particularly at one period, did little to redeem the European character from the censure of the Hindus. Many of them sought the shores of India as adventurers, and finding a very scrupulous morality little better than a burden, "*unbaptized* themselves," (as Mr Burke expressed it) in crossing the ocean. Those who landed upon our Eastern territory with better views, still found the scene by no means propitious to their growth in virtue. The bustle of a camp, the mercenary routine of the counting house, the absence from all public instruction, the want of that controlling influence which the voice of a large Christian body exercises over every member of it; all these circumstances conspired to give such an expression to the character of Eng-

lishmen, as would conciliate little esteem for their Religion*.

Now although there is truth in this statement, still some observations will serve to weaken the force of it.

In the first place, this sketch of our countrymen in India would not faithfully delineate the present generation. The greater stability of our Eastern empire; its high place in the eyes of the world; its present political form; the exalted virtues, as well as talents of some of those who have swayed its delegated sceptre, have contributed to raise the British character to a higher standard. If there is still perhaps discernible in our Eastern countrymen some philosophical indifference, and supercilious pride; yet that delicate sentiment of honour, that generous love of national equity, which were banished for a season, have again asserted their rights to the bosoms of Englishmen. These being *public* virtues, will give a lustre to the British character, in the eyes of the Hindus, which a deficiency in the milder and more reposed virtues will scarcely destroy.

Again—If the obstacle is really now considerable, it is to be remembered, that upon the scheme

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* See Tennant's Ind. Rec. Acc. Bapt. Miss. passim.

here proposed its resistance will every day diminish. In the plan to diffuse Christian knowledge in Asia, we certainly mean to include that portion of the population which is British. The very point, indeed, where our countrymen are chiefly collected, must be the first and principal field of our operations. It is our duty as patriots, and our interest as aiming at the conversion of India, to promote the piety of our countrymen. If we gain them to our cause, Calcutta will become an advanced station, from whence our observations may be taken, and every movement of the campaign advantageously conducted.

We shall now proceed, in a few words, to contrast with these obstacles, the *peculiar circumstances by which the design of diffusing Christian knowledge in India seems to be facilitated.*

The internal state of the country is favourable to this design. In some regions the preacher of the Gospel finds himself chained to the spot where he first settles, by the natural difficulties of the country, or the badness of the roads. Such obstacles opposed the first teachers of Christianity in England, and confined their exertions to the Southern parts of the island for a considerable period. In India they scarcely exist. The missionary may travel at a moderate expence, and without any

risk*. He may thus change and enlarge the scene of his labours; may apply his force at the point of least resistance; and not exhaust his breath upon "ears which will not hear."

An advantage of the same kind is the *populousness* of Hindostan. The icy regions of Lapland, and the wastes of America, scarcely furnish any hearers for the preachers who have visited them. In these countries, the waters of the deluge might be thought but lately to have withdrawn, and they are now in the state of the Eastern nations near 3000 years ago, "waiting to be inhabited."—But in India the population is enormous; no word need be wasted; nor will the physician of the mind ever want a subject on whom to exercise his skill.

The situation and character of the people also afford some circumstances, upon the whole, favourable to the diffusion of Religion.

It has sometimes been contended that a considerable degree of civilization must precede every reasonable attempt at conversion. Now however false that hypothesis must be which virtually denies that the introduction of sound moral principles is a necessary step to real civilization; that Chris-

* In Bengal, particularly, the number of navigable streams exceedingly diminish the trouble and expence of motion.

tianity is so plain in her principles and precepts, that "all who run may read," and comprehend them; that there is no degree of darkness which the light of heaven cannot dissipate; that the common people of every country have 'heard' Christ and his apostles 'gladly;'—still, if there are found some who allow any weight to it, they will do well to remember that, in the case of India, it fails of its application. It is true, there are multitudes in India who are utterly uninstructed; but then there are also multitudes who are fit recipients for any truths which may be proposed to them Those even who are ignorant of letters, from the general illumination which is diffused through a country partially civilized, are capable of distinguishing right and wrong; of recognizing their true interests; and of comprehending those arguments and images which a teacher of the Gospel would employ. He, in short, who believes national luxury to be an enemy to Religion, ought yet to think the state of India favourable, where the polish is neither high nor universal. He, on the other hand, who conceives civilization to provide the best soil for Religion, should be glad to scatter its seed among the cultivated plains of India. If this be true, is it too much to conclude, that as that is the real center of a system, where all extreme points ultimately meet; so that must be the real centre

of action, and proper field of enterprize, where men of the most opposite prejudices may associate and unite.

Amongst the circumstances which respect the natives, and which favour our design, we do not hesitate to place their *passiveness*. However corrupt may be the source from which this quality springs, and however contemptible such a feature in the national character, still it opens a way for every attack which is made upon them. In some countries, the mildest and most circumspect attempts to shake the established superstition, would be resisted "even unto death." Asia has been thirteen times invaded*, and thirteen times, with comparatively little resistance, she has submitted to the yoke of a conqueror. In the same temper she has met the attempts of Christian preachers; and if they have not enjoyed the triumphs of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, they have also been exempt from those innumerable 'perils' which met him at all points, and pursued him through every stage of his journey.

The Baptist Missionaries who have attested the truth of the above statement, mention another pro-

* Montesquieu.

perty of this people, highly conducive to the interests of Christianity.

The indolent and passive Hindu (by a strange discordancy of character) is found to be a *ready and anxious listener* to any instructions which are bestowed upon him. "The attention of these people to the Gospel," say the Missionaries, "is astonishing*"—The gospel then will probably find in India what it principally covets,—a fair hearing.

The *political situation* of India is also highly favourable to the introduction of Christianity.

It is always seen how readily a people receives the religion of their sovereign. The general conversion of the Roman Empire, and the progress of the reformation, may be adduced in proof of this position; and the page of history is fruitful of such examples. If this natural tendency has hitherto been checked in India, on the part of the Mahomedans, by the hatred in which their administration was held, and on our own part, for a time, by the same cause, and since by that supine indifference with which we have regarded the superstition of Brahma; still under a change

* Bapt. Miss. i. 137. et seq.

of circumstances, a gradual change of national opinion might be anticipated. It must be admitted, indeed, that the operation of this principle would be slow, and that the Religion thus introduced would, in many cases, consist rather in a change of name, than of principle. Fortunately, however, there are other means by which the government may be instrumental in this great work. Christianity, in the first ages, by the assistance of miracles, was strong enough to struggle with the state. Since then perhaps, neither this, nor any other Religion, has largely and finally prevailed in a country, where the state has been its enemy. Let the ægis of government, however, be employed to shelter, as well the preachers as the converts, and the Religion will thrive under it. Nor is this too much to ask. There is a wide difference between persecuting one party, and protecting another; between beating down the arm of Brahminism, and staunching the wounds it inflicts. We may have no right to overthrow this superstitious tyranny, but we have the fullest to shelter the miserable subjects of it.

In thus contrasting the peculiar circumstances, by which the diffusion of Christianity in India is impeded, or facilitated, we have not feared, that even when unsupported by *fact*, the conclusion would be unfavourable to our present argu-

ment.—If we now however appeal to fact, it will immediately be seen, that under the help of God, we have still less reason to despair of success in this design. This will lead us to a short history of Christianity in the East.

The Christians of *Malabar*, the supposed disciples of St. Thomas *, to whom we have already referred, appear to have been the earliest converts to Christianity in that part of the world to which our attention is directed. The account given of the apostolic original of this Church is very suspicious, and the most authentic testimony fixes its establishment in the fifth century. In the histories of the Nestorians, to which division of Christians it was till of late believed † the Church of Malabar belonged, it is frequently mentioned as respectable both for numbers and piety. The Portugueze, on their arrival on the coast, were greeted by the view of more than 100 Churches, dedicated to the Saviour of the World. Their interested policy, however, and popish corruption, would not endure the independence and simplicity of the people of Malabar; and these last found their bitterest enemies under the banner of the cross. That this

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* The most authentic account of this Church is probably that given by La Croze, in his Christianisme des Indes.

† Vid. Ker's Report.

Church was founded so late as the fifth century, teaches us that Christianity has taken deep root, and spread wide, in a large portion of India, without the assistance of miraculous powers. That it has preserved itself uncorrupted amidst the contagion of universal example, is a proof that the Hindu abhorrence of change is not confined to the disciples of Brahma; and that if they once should "put their hands to the plough," they are not likely "to look back."

Although the *success of Roman Catholic* missionaries in the Empire of *China*, seems hardly to bear upon the present question, and by no means to afford any conclusive evidence, that protestants would be equally successful in India; still it has more weight in the present discussion than may perhaps at first sight appear. It may be objected to any application of evidence of this kind, that the Chinese were less attached to their superstition than the Hindus; and that the Jesuits so disguised Christianity as to take away her peculiarities, and to render her no uncomely object in the eyes of pagans.

With regard to the first of these objections, it should be observed that the superstition of the Chinese is perhaps of older date, and of more general diffusion, than any other idolatrous sys-

tem*; that there are cases in which this people have displayed the most obstinate attachment to their faith†; that we have perhaps first gained our notions of their flexibility in Religion from the success of the Jesuits in converting them, and then used this quality to explain the success of the Jesuits. As to the second objection, we should remember, that the defence of the Jesuits is not less full and confident than the charge of their enemies; that they persist in saying they licensed the converts in the practice of no rites which had an idolatrous object‡; that what have been termed

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* There seem very strong reasons for believing that the Chinese Yo, the Sommonacodom of the Siamese, and other Eastern Isles, and the Boodh of the Ceylonese, are the same Idol under different titles; that this worship has not only existed from time immemorial, but that it once prevailed throughout India, and perhaps gave birth to the Religion of Brahma. Vid. Chamber's Essay. Asiatic Researches vol. i.

† When the French monarch sent an embassy to the King of Siam, the object of whose idolatry was the same with that of the Chinese, to express his desire that they should be worshippers of the same God, Char Naraya (the reigning monarch) asked whether the French King could think it likely he should abandon a religion that "had been followed in his dominions without interruption for 2229 years." Tachard Prem. Voy. de Siam, p. 218.

‡ The converts abandoned the worship of spirits and genii, but were permitted to perform an annual rite to the memory of Confucius.

religious ceremonies by their adversaries, were merely civil *; that when brought to the stake, the converts of Japan exhibited a constancy worthy of the first martyrs †. If these observations carry any weight with them, it follows that in a country where the climate‡ and moral character of the people differ little from those of Hindostan, where the superstition is not less ancient nor less indulgent, Christianity (not indeed in its purest form) gained for a time, and might have preserved a powerful ascendency. From this statement it is surely not unwarrantable to infer, that the difficulties of introducing Christianity in her purest shape into India are not insuperable.

The success of the *Dutch in Ceylon*, may perhaps be quoted with still more confidence upon the present occasion. Its weight in the scale of evidence suffers no diminution from any of those causes which operated in the case of the Jesuits. The superstition of the Ceylonese is ancient, and it is highly venerable in the eyes of its adherents; the Christianity for which it has made way is

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* Du Halde, Description de la Chine, tom. iii. 142.

† Charleroix, Hist. Generale de Japan.

‡ This statement is particularly directed against those who, with Montesquieu at their head, affirm that the limits of Christianity are prescribed by climate.

pure and spiritual. The province of Jaffnapatnam is the only portion of the Dutch possessions in the island, of whose religious state we have any minute account. In the year 1668 it appears that out of 278,759 inhabitants, 188,364 were professed Christians. In the year 1802 the number of the protestant Christians was 138,896, of Roman Catholics 9632.* It is less a matter of astonishment that the number of Christians should have now diminished, than that any should have survived the want of ministers, and the chances of war. If the Dutch had persisted in the good work they had begun, and if they had carried on their conquests in the island, from the coasts to the interior, there is every reason to believe that the profession of Christianity would soon have become universal. Great Britain has already in some degree proved herself worthy of this conquest, by entering upon that line of duty, which her predecessors had almost abandoned.

The cases of China and Ceylon* have been taken, though on some accounts not strictly in point, as

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* It is the opinion as well of Mr. Buchanan as of the Baptist missionaries, that upon the whole, the efforts of the Roman Catholic will assist rather than impede the progress of real Religion in the East. See Buchanan's Memoir, and Acc. Bapt. Miss.

those alone where the efforts to diffuse Christianity have been properly national, and at all proportioned to the magnitude of the object.

It remains to notice the *Protestant Missions in India.*—The Danes enjoy the honorable distinction of having laid the first stone of the Protestant Church in India *. In the year 1705, they sent out Ziegenbalgh † and Plutchaw, two members of the university of Halle, and persons of talent and piety, as missionaries to their own settlement of Tranquebar. In 1710 it was found that the society in Denmark, which under the patronage of the monarch, had undertaken to regulate and to maintain this mission, could raise no fund adequate to its expenditure. The society in England for promoting Christian knowledge, saw their situation, and determined to make good their deficiencies. They entered into the concerns of the mission, and their zeal and munificence have been the pillars on which it has stood and florished for near a century. Under their auspices the mission

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* For the history of this Mission, see La Croze, Hist. du Christianisme des Indes. And Reports of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

† This illustrious man died at the age of 36, but not before he had completed a translation of the Scriptures into the Tamul language.

has extended itself to Madras, Calcutta, Cuddalore, to the capital of the Madura country, and to the kingdom of Tanjore. Of the many distinguished persons employed in this mission, perhaps none deserves more honorable mention than Mr. Swartz, who indeed has been entitled, "the Apostle of the East." For fifty years this venerable man, under God, supported the cause of Christianity in India. He rendered the most important services to the state; he so conciliated the esteem of one monarch of Tanjore, as to obtain from him an appropriation of 500 pagodas annually, for the support of the missionaries; and to be appointed the guardian of his son. This son, since his death, has requested to have his statue sent from England, in order, by placing it in the capital of his dominions, "to perpetuate the memory of that great and good man."—The success of this mission was for some time inconsiderable; but since then the scale has turned, and the most sanguine expectations of the good have been satisfied. Nearly 4000 persons were baptized in one district alone*, within the course of a few months, in the year 1803. "Whole villages with their chiefs embraced the Christian doctrine, and converted their pagodas into

* Reports Soc. for promoting Christian Knowlege, 1804, p. 145.

Christian churches, after having broken their idols to pieces and buried them deep in the ground." The mission is now suffering severely under the loss of three of its principal members, Swartz, Gericke, and Jœnicke; but let their places be filled, and there is no reason why we should not anticipate the same success.

The success of the Baptist mission may also be adduced to prove, that the obstacles which oppose the diffusion of Christianity in India are not insuperable.—This mission was instituted in 1793, and its ministers, though supported by a very inadequate fund, have by their zeal and talents conquered many of the difficulties by which they were opposed. They have issued one complete translation of the Bible, and begun others; have circulated a variety of tracts; have instituted schools; and have preached the Gospel to large congregations in places remote from each other. Nor have they labored ineffectually. Although the events of the first years of the mission were such as might have damped courage less than theirs, they have persisted "against hope;" and we find them at length with congregations exceedingly multiplied, and with embassies from five different sects of Hindus, soliciting instruction in Christianity *. It

* Vid. Acc. Baptist Miss. and Bapt. Magazine.

should be added, that many of the converts to this, as well as to the Danish mission, are persons of Caste, and even Brahmins.

Having now proved, as well by a comparative view of those circumstances by which the design of diffusing Christian knowledge in India is impeded or assisted, as by a statement of facts respecting the progress of Christianity in that country, that the project of diffusing it is not to be considered as visionary and impracticable, we shall next proceed to enquire into the particular means which should be employed to secure this end.

CHAPTER II.

MEANS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO INDIA.

IT is singular, that in the various plans suggested for the propagation of Christianity in the East, the erection of an *establishment* has never been strongly urged, till the memoir of Mr. Buchanan was laid before the public. In his general views we completely concur, though perhaps we might differ from him in the extent of the proposed ecclesiastical institution. We shall proceed to state what appears to us the *expediency of forming a complete Church establishment in India;* including a bishop and the inferior officers of the see, upon the model of the Church of England; with such additions as the exigencies of the case may demand. Having done this, we shall endeavor to point out such *subordinate 'means'* as might be advantageously employed under the sanction of the establishment.

The expediency of erecting a Church establishment in India, may be determined by these two distinct considerations. First, that without it *success in diffusing Christianity* appears to be scarcely possible, and secondly, that it *appears to be far less desirable.*

In searching the archives of history these two facts will strongly arrest the attention *; that the ablest princes who have designed the introduction or propagation of a Religion, have always begun by founding an establishment; and that without one, no religion since the apostolic days has been widely or permanently diffused. That such a policy was general among the ancients, may be received upon the authority of one of the most laborious and successful searchers into antiquity. "We find, (says Warburton,) that all the states and people of the ancient world had an established Church, which was under the more immediate protection of the state, in contradistinction to those which

* If these shall appear indequate to so great an object, it must be remembered that all means will have the same appearance, when referred to an end for whose accomplishment the co-operation of God is so cordially promised, and so imperiously required; "not by might nor by power,"—the might and power of man—"but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Zephaniah 4, 6.

were only tolerated *." If then the wise and successful have uniformly employed this instrument of conversion, is it judicious in Great Britain to cast it away? But we pass from the conduct of these men, to the principles on which they acted, and on which we ought to act.

The conversion of India being the end proposed, what are the *different* plans upon which it may be attempted? In the first place the *present* system might be further prosecuted, and the task of preaching be left to the *Missionaries* sent out by various religious societies. Now it is certain that the number of missionaries already employed is by no means adequate to the work they have in hand. It is also certain that, without some change, the number cannot be much encreased; as the funds for fitting out missionaries have always exceeded the demands upon them. But let the number be materially encreased, and we have the authority of Sir William Jones for believing that "neither Mussulmans nor Hindus will ever be converted by missions (alone) from the Church of Rome, or any other Church †."

The next plan is that proposed by this distin-

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* Divine Legation, i. 231.

† Sir William Jones's Works, i. 279.

guished person himself; "to distribute such chapters of the prophets, particularly Isaiah, as are indisputably evangelical, together with one of the Gospels, and a plain prefatory discourse, containing full evidence of the very distant ages in which the predictions themselves, and the history of the Divine Person predicted, were severally made public; and then quietly to disperse the work among the well educated natives; with whom, if in due time it failed of producing very salutary fruit by its natural influence, we could only lament more than ever the strength of prejudice, and the weakness of unassisted reason *." It is plainly discernible from the manner of stating this scheme, that the sagacious proposer of it did not indulge very sanguine expectations of its ultimate success. Indeed, no very brilliant hopes could be indulged, when it is considered that this plan could embrace those only who could read and reason. It has before been asked, "Have any of the rulers believed on him?" And when these rulers are Brahmins, the same question would certainly recur.

There can be, nevertheless, no doubt, that the plan of circulating the sacred scriptures is infinitely preferable to that of a mission, where

* Sir William Jones's Works, i. 280.

such a circulation (which is the case he seems to take) is not a primary object. If however he had considered the hands of the missionaries as those, by which alone the scriptures could be 'dispersed' in India, perhaps he would have united these two schemes *. But if his objections to the employment of an independent and unorganised mission were final; still there is every reason to think that the erection of an 'establishment,' which would at once control the missionaries, and give the widest possible circulation to the scriptures, would have met with his entire approbation, and dissipated many of those clouds which seemed, in his eyes, to overhang every plan for converting the Hindus.

The superiority of that system which takes an establishment for its basis, will be seen by a few considerations.

In the *first* place the creation of an establishment will give an increased *authority* to those instructions we communicate. In the present state of things it is scarcely a matter of wonder, that the Hindus do not change their opinions. Those

* The missionaries employed by the Court of Denmark, by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, and by the Baptists, disperse translations of the Bible in more than one dialect of India.

they now hold are at least guaranteed by the common belief of the millions around them. Christianity, on the contrary, is now proposed to them simply as the opinion of an individual. Some have no powers for the investigation of evidence, but would respect authority. Give truth, then, the sanction which it deserves. Let that "cloud of witnesses" attest our Religion, which is furnished by the concurrent faith of a great nation. If preachers went among them from the bosom of an establishment, they would be received as parts of a mighty whole. They would plead the universal assent of their countrymen for many generations, and would thus seem, instead of delivering the sentiments of one mind, to carry "the mind of ages in a single breast."

Again, the creating an establishment in India is the only means of securing any *unity of design* amongst those who are to be its apostles. Under the present system of independent missionaries, scarcely any two preachers will dwell upon the same doctrines, use the same interpretation, or enforce the same ordinances. We do not here speak of the fatal consequences of this discordancy when Christianity shall have been diffused, but of the obstacles which it opposes to this diffusion. There is nothing by which the interests of truth are so deeply shaken, as by the distinc-

tions and contests of its adherents. Hume justifies his "sceptic," on the score of that discrepancy which prevails in the opinions of philosophers. The suspension of those privileges which Christianity enjoyed in China, and the furious persecutions of Japan, originated in the contention of the different classes of missionaries. Our teachers should issue out with the same instructions, and the same formulary, or the natives will never learn, that instead of having, like them, every man his own God, we have all "*one* Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

A third important end secured by an establishment would be a *system of operation well constructed and generally pursued. Now* every man chooses his own ground, and attempts to atchieve his victory by single combat. *Then* the movements would possess all the skill and compactness of a well disciplined army. On the spot, the members of the Indian Church would be able to examine the field of contest, and distribute the forces to the most advantage. There are many parts of India where the attachment to Caste, is less ardent than in others *; and where a spirit of hostility to the old system indicates some predis-

* Vid. Buchanan's Essay. Bapt. Miss. Acc.

position to a better. Points such as these would upon the proposed plan be watched, and the supplies poured in where the demand was the greatest. It is also essential to any scheme of conversion, that every vacancy which occurs in a ministerial station should be immediately filled up. At present, out of the twelve chaplains attached to the town of Calcutta, and the presidencies of Madras and Bombay, there is an usual deficiency of four*. An interval of two years almost always occurs before any vacancy is supplied. By this circumstance the interests of Religion are of course deeply wounded. The Danish missionaries, in summing up the causes of lamentation for the venerable Swartz and Gericke, call our attention frequently to their deserted congregations, and to disappointed enquirers—to sheep without a shepherd. Now, no remedy can be applied to this evil, at once adequate to the end proposed, and consistent with our ecclesiastical institutions, but the appointment of an Indian episcopacy. The want specified can only be relieved by a power of ordination; and this power cannot properly be vested in any but episcopal hands.

The last reason we would urge upon this head, is, that this is the only scheme on which any kind

* Vid. Tennant's Ind. Rec. Buchanan's Memoir.

of '*responsibility*,' amongst the clergy themselves can be secured in India. It is true that the missionaries of India have been distinguished by zeal, wisdom, and piety: but it is also true that missionaries have gone out, and from this country, who have dishonored their great cause, and rather confirmed than shaken the superstitions of the people they visited. We are also well satisfied that many of the chaplains, upon our Indian stations, have in their own conduct borne honorable testimony to the religion they professed. Still this is not universally the case. Now wherever any failure of this kind arises, it is obvious, that upon the present scheme all responsibility is excluded. It is indeed true, that the interests of our foreign Churches are under the inspection of the see of London; but the remoteness of the scene renders such inspection merely nominal. In India no control can be exercised, as a sufficient disparity of ecclesiastical rank does not prevail. By an espiscopal institution the double purpose would be served of providing a tribunal, to which all the ecclesiastics of India would be amenable; and an individual with whom all the responsibility might rest. They would be responsible to the Indian bishop, and he to the metropolitan in Europe. If nothing else recommended this scheme, the strong analogy that it bears to that improved and admired system of po-

litical administration by which India is now governed would be a sufficient sanction. At present the religious and political systems do not harmonize; and therefore as far as analogy may instruct us, if the last succeeds, little ought to be expected from the first.

If the diffusion of Christianity is scarcely '*possible*' upon any other scheme than that of an establishment, it is also far less '*desirable.*' Suppose the whole of India to be evangelized under the present system, what would be the result? In the first place it should be observed, that though the zeal of conversion might, during the progress of it, preserve the purity of Religion, its corruption would begin with its general prevalence; as water purifies in running, and does not corrupt till it stagnates. If therefore an establishment was not before necessary, the interests of Religion would in the case of its diffusion call for it. Again, the same political advantages would not accrue, from a propagation of Christian belief upon the present system as on that of an establishment. The Indian converts would then consist of millions of men ranging under the banners of different sects, and might be animated in some degree by a party spirit*. In

* It is to be hoped that those who have objected to the introduction of Christianity into India, from a regard to its political consequences, have chiefly considered the introduction of it to take place under the present system.

every province and parish would be seen the "imperium in imperio"—a society of which, in the most material sense, the monarch is not the supreme head. Nor could the remedy of an establishment, however expedient, be then applied. For it is not probable that the number of any sect would so far exceed that of the rest as to warrant the endowment of it with exclusive privileges. All interference therefore would be little less than tyranny, and every necessary restraint be spurned at as the irons of intolerance.

Upon the whole, therefore, the expediency of erecting a complete establishment in India, seems capable of the strictest demonstration.

There are perhaps but *two* arguments of any weight which can be urged against such a measure. These are, the *expence of such an establishment*; and the apprehension that it would be converted into the means of *enriching a crowd of needy adventurers*, instead of strengthening the exertions of poor but zealous labourers in the vineyard of God.

To the first of these objections we would reply in the words of Mr. Buchanan *: "By the late "cessions and conquests (alone) provinces have "been added to our sovereignty, which would pay

* Memoir, p. 14.

"the whole ecclesiastical establishment of England, "many times over." The evil stated in the second will, we think, be almost done away by a measure which will be proposed when we come to point out the subordinate 'means.' At present, however, we have one remark to suggest which will go far to blunt the edge of both these objections. The Indian establishment must on all accounts be constructed upon the principle of *the least possible expence*. The salaries must be so proportioned as to hold out little attractions to the idle, whilst they would give efficacy to the labors of the good; they must rather provide the "sinews of war," than the fruits of victory. If this end be strictly kept in view, the expence will not be formidable, nor the clergy corrupt.

We proceed now to point out the means which, under the sanction of an establishment, it seems expedient to employ for the introduction of Christianity, and all its moral and political benefits, into India.

CHAPTER III.

PARTICULAR MEANS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO INDIA.

AT the head of these must be placed, the *distribution of the Sacred Scriptures translated into the different dialects of India.* This measure is almost too obvious to require or to derive assistance from argument. It has all the authority of history to recommend it. The æras of most rapid conversion to Christianity, even during the prevalence of miraculous gifts, are those most conspicuous for the translation and dispersion of the holy writings. Every able impostor has issued a written document of his own principles, and trusted much to its silent labours, and general diffusion *. A

* La Croze attributes the diffusion of Mahomedanism in India, which he says is considerable, "au soin les missionaires "Arabes et Persans ont eu de mettre leur Alcoran entre "les mains des peuples, et de leur en procurer l'intelligence."

still more satisfactory reason for not insisting at length upon the expediency of this measure, is, that it has already in a considerable degree been carried into execution. The Tamul translation has gained a wide circulation in Malabar, and the adjoining provinces. In the North of India, the Bengalee copy has been liberally distributed by the Baptist Missionaries. The same persons undertook a translation into the Hindostanee; which has been abandoned only because the more advanced labours of another translator rendered it unnecessary *.

A question here arises †, by what means the translation of the scriptures into the other dialects of India may be effected. We have no hesitation in saying that the translation and the printing should be carried on in India. An intention had been conceived of printing a Chinese manuscript of part of the New Testament, found in the Bri-

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* The British and Foreign Bible Society are already in possion of specimens partly printed, and partly manuscript, of translations into ten of the Oriental dialects, among which are the Shanscrit and the Chinese.

† The manner in which Mr. Buchanan has proposed this enquiry, (see Statement of the Question, book second) renders it necessary to notice this dispute; otherwise the point seems scarcely a matter of controversy.

tish Museum. But upon an estimate of the expence, it was ascertained that five thousand copies would not have cost less than six thousand pounds *. If, however, the expence did not forbid us to attempt to publish here translations into the Eastern dialects, the impracticability of the design will at once display itself. Where are the translators to be found; and by whom are their translations to be corrected? Let Mr. Carey, himself a missionary, and a translator of the Bible into Bengalee, instruct us in the comparative facility by which this design can be effected in the East. "We have "engaged in a translation of the scriptures into "the Hindostanee, Persian, Maharashta, and Ortul "languages; and intend to engage in more. Per- "haps so many advantages for translating the "Bible into all the languages of the East, will "never meet in any one situation again; viz. A "possibility of obtaining learned natives of all "these countries; a sufficiency of worldly good "things, (with a moderate degree of annual assist- "ance from England) to carry us through it; a "printing office; a good library of critical writings; "a habit of translating; and a disposition to do "it. We shall, however, need about 1000l.

* Vide First Report British and Foreign Bible Society.

"per annum for some years, to enable us to "print them; and with this it may be done "in about fifteen years, if the Lord preserve our "lives and health*." Instead then of making any extravagant attempts at home, let government give its sanction and its purse to these indefatigable labourers abroad. Into this channel also let the national generosity empty itself. If the whole of our plan is carried into execution, the erection of an establishment will disengage the fund now employed by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, for the support of missionaries. Should they lend this also for a time to the work of translation, in less than fifteen years no part of India need be unenlightened by the presence of the book of God.

Closely connected with the dispersion of the sacred scriptures, and inferior to it alone in importance, is the circulation of small '*tracts*' suited to the circumstances of the people. The numerous apologies for Christianity in the second century, though defective perhaps in their execution, yet shew that the early Christians did not deem it right, that their Religion should be suffered to stand

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* Vid. First and Third Rep. Brit. and For. Bible Society. Two thousand pounds have since been granted by this Society.

alone. The great emperor Acber, in his attempts to reform the Hindus, availed himself of this means of instruction, by collecting and publishing the 'Heetopades,' or 'Amicable Instructor;' a collection of familiar apologues. In our own times the philosophical contrivers of the French revolution employed these popular tracts as a conveyance for their doctrines *; and in England, these very doctrines have been resisted and subdued, in great measure, by tracts of an exactly opposite tendency. The Indian missionaries, it should be observed, have anticipated this measure also, and have distributed in Hindostan many thousand tracts upon the most important subjects †. They have hitherto been greedily received; and, if they are constructed with due regard to the peculiarities of the Gospel; if they are accommodated to the habits and genius of the people, which seem to require that they should be short, figurative in language, and impassioned in sentiment; this circulation, probably, will not only continue but increase. When indeed it is considered that the press exercises a most despotic influence over the character and institutions of a people; that it has never before been fairly enlisted in the cause of the apostles of Christianity; that the early Chris-

* Barruel. † Baptist Mission. Accounts.

tians possessed no instrument of the same power for scattering the seeds of religion; that they could, for want of the press, issue no popular addresses, nor even abundantly distribute the scriptures: that tracts may penetrate recesses, where preachers would not dare to enter; that they are not like oral instructions, a fugitive sound; that they meet the heart in all its attitudes; that they argue without feeling anger, and with less danger of creating it; we may confidently anticipate great success from resorting to this new weapon in our spiritual warfare.

Something should next be added concerning the '*Ministers*' of the Indian Church.

In proposing an episcopal establishment in the East, we did not mean to confine it to the precise form which our own Church exhibits.

Christianity indeed has never refused, nor does she now forbid, such variety in her outward appointments as may meet the exigencies of the country into which she is introduced. Her original organization made no provision for local ministers; a scheme well adapted to a period in which the religion had no where established itself. Its actual constitution, in the reformed Churches, is such as could alone be suited to a period in which the circulation of the religion was universal. Great Britain, surrounded as she is by unconverted co-

lonies, demands a form of ecclesiastical polity in which the ancient and modern systems are consolidated. The Church of Rome, and the most ambitious bodies of dissidents amongst ourselves, have a certain proportion of their effective force disposable, and by means of them are laying the most remote points of the Globe under contribution. And under every view of the subject, an institution, part of whose object is to propagate religion, must be expected to differ from one, whose exclusive design is to preserve it. On these grounds, the following observations are suggested.

At present the number of stations in India, where chaplains have been placed, bears a very small proportion to that of the large cities of Hindostan, and much less to that of the population. The souls of six provinces are intrusted nominally to six chaplains, of whom two are generally absent. Hence in many places the rites of baptism, marriage, and burial, are often performed by laymen, and as often entirely passed over*. The number of ministers therefore must plainly be increased. Now it is probable that the establishment would give such additional respectability and attractions to the ministerial rank in India, that sufficient and eligible

* Buchanan, Tenant, &c.

persons would be found to fill the principal stations. There would still, however, remain innumerable villages for which no provision is made, and where from their having no English resident, there would be small inducements for the clergy to establish themselves. For such stations it appears expedient to follow the usages of the antient Church, and to employ a subordinate class of ministers. These persons might hold the rank of Catechists; might be responsible to the minister of the adjoining station; and either remain stationary in one village; or, whilst the number of converts are few, might have the charge of several instrusted to them. This measure has been adopted, though not upon system, by the missionaries in the kingdom of Tanjore.

But it may be objected, "that it is found difficult, even now, to fill up the thin ranks of the Indian mission, as they fall a prey to their labors, and to the climate—what hopes then could there be of so strengthening the numbers as to give any efficiency to the proposed plan." To this we first answer as before, that multitudes who have hitherto refused the service will rejoice, under this new arrangement, to enrol themselves. It is true that the clergy of Great Britain have for some centuries, displayed considerable backwardness to devote themselves, as foreign missionaries, to the propaga-

tion of Religion. The causes of this may, perhaps, be found in that ardent attachment to his country, which makes every Englishman unwilling to live or die beyond its precincts; in that honorable provision which our Church makes for her ministers; and in that want of zeal to propagate Religion, which frequently accompanies a spirit of universal toleration*. Still we may venture to say that none of these obstacles would have prevailed, if the basis of the missionary system had been different. The member of an establishment may not want a becoming zeal, and yet require two things before he enters upon a mission; to be accredited of his Church, and protected by his government. Instead of which, upon the present scheme, the missionary sinks nearly to a level with the sectarist, and feels nothing of the sceptre but the weight of it. Upon the whole then it may be hoped, that upon this meliorated system, Great Britain will wipe out any shame she has incurred, and send many laborers into the vineyard. It is not, however, intended to leave the Indian Church dependent even upon these improved resources.

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* The Jews and the Roman Catholics, both intolerant, will "compass sea and land to make a proselyte."

As the difficulties of providing ministers for the conversion of India are not of an ordinary nature, we ought not perhaps to expect the conquest of them unless by unusual means. Upon this supposition the following scheme is suggested. It is probable that even among the truly pious, those who will propose themselves as Indian ministers will be found chiefly *poor* and *unconnected*. Others will deem it right to fill the sphere in which they are placed at home: or will, in a dubious case, give way to their own attachments, and to the solicitations of their friends. If, therefore, among the first class, there should be any who are early in life devoted by their parents to the Indian Church; or who themselves, at any age, make a free choice of the office; it would be highly desirable to turn this disposition to account. Poverty should not exclude them from the ministry, nor a want of instruction render them inefficient members of it. For such persons, let a seminary or college be provided in Great Britain, where they might receive instruction in Divinity, and in the Eastern languages, suited to the office for which they are designed*. If at

* In this college a preference, among the younger members, might be given to the children of the English Clergy.

the end of a given time they were found adapted by constitutional vigor, by their talents, by their piety, for the situation; let them be conveyed to India. Under the eye of the establishment there, they might have their ministerial functions assigned them; they might for a time hold the rank of Catechists, and thus supersede the necessity of having native Catechists*, a measure, at the best, of considerable hazard. This rank might be considered as probationary, and after a fixed time, the option remain with the Bishop, or with the Bishop sitting in consistory, either to ordain, and to fix them in higher stations; or with due cause to refuse ordination and appointments.

It is impossible to close these remarks upon the functions of the ministers of the Indian Church, without strongly inculcating the regard that should be had to their qualifications for the sacred office. Whether we consider the magnitude of the task to which they are consecrated; their state of imperfect responsibility; their large influence; the power of climate, or the contagion of example;

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* The opinion of Mr. Gericke upon this point may be found in the Reports of the Society for promoting, Christian Knowledge. 1804. p. 147.

one and all these circumstances demand, that for such an office, we "lay hands suddenly on no man." The minister of Christ in India, to do justice to his cause, must not be taken indiscriminately from the ranks. He must be familiar with the principles and the precepts of his own Religion, and with the holy volume in which they have been preserved. He must have entered into the hideous recesses of Hinduism, and must carry about with him a torch to expose them to others. To his acquaintance with the rival systems must be added a knowledge of man; a species of knowledge which must be first studied in his own bosom, and then perfected in the world. As personal qualifications, he should possess a mild demeanor, a ready address, a general fluency of speech*. But it is into the moral and religious qualities of the preacher that we are bound to make the strictest inquisition. The apostle of Christianity stands forward in the most awful, as well as dig-

* Whatever evils belong to extempore instruction as a general usage of an established Church, the Indian Minister could for a time adopt no other method.—The Baptist missionaries were long before they could attempt to deliver a regular discourse of any kind; the meetings had more the air of a debate than a lecture. Vid. Baptist Missionaries Account. vol. i.

nified character that man can wear;—the exemplar and oracle of the Religion of God. He would indeed rejoice to turn the eye of his examiners, from himself, to those of whom "the world was not worthy;" but they will naturally not exchange a witness before them, for those whom they may conceive adorned with fictitious virtues. In this situation he will be influenced by a compound feeling, originating partly in the sense of his own infirmity, and partly in the dignity of the office with which he is invested. Governed by this feeling he will be seen always distrusting himself, but reposing confidently upon the arm of God. His zeal for God and man will be associated with a complete indifference to his own interests; he will be bold in the quotation of Scripture, but cautious in the interpretation of it; he will be firm without severity, and mild without weakness. As the ambassador of Christ, he will make *his* promises, his sufferings, his example, the great themes of his argument. As "man, all that is human will be dear to him."—Charity, in short, or love to man founded upon love to God, will be his master principle; and this will carry him a peaceful conqueror through obstacles which force would never have overcome.

It may be said, that by placing the standard so high, the number of preachers will be greatly

diminished. It is true that he who cares only to raise a numerous army, does not very narrowly inspect those who enlist themselves; but our policy should be that of the commander, who, on the eve of a battle, chose rather to thin his ranks than to retain in them one that was unworthy. Nor is it just to urge any complaint against the height of the standard proposed. Our desire might be thus stated in other words. Let no man without an appropriate *education, good sense, a warm heart, and genuine piety,* be employed to preach the Gospel in India.

The next point on which we shall insist, is the *institution of schools* in Hindostan. That able and implacable enemy of Christianity, the emperor Julian, sagaciously conceived that this Religion might be resisted, with the greatest chance of success, by those very weapons with which she herself had nearly routed all other Religions. We find him therefore instituting Pagan schools, as he confesses, in imitation of the Christians, with the view of reinstating Heathenism in her original honors. The policy of this distinguished person has been pursued with far more success (because employed in the cause of truth) in the Northern part of our own dominions. The introduction of parish schools into Scotland has operated like a charm. These institutions found her peasantry

in that state of darkness which feudal institutions always loved and cherished; and have rendered them perhaps the most instructed and virtuous people in Europe *. The same experiment is now making in Ireland, with like expectations of success. The establishment of charity schools, and the general disposition and ability of individuals in this country to furnish the means of education to the poor, are the only apologies (and these are insufficient) for not creating similar schools among ourselves. The Mahomedans, (certainly neither inexperienced nor unsuccessful in disseminating their religion) almost universally adopt this method, and where the introduction of seminaries has been resisted, the natives have been dragooned into compliance †. The last example we shall quote

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* Currie's Life of Burns. Andrew Fletcher, of Saltown, in his view of the state of the Scottish poor in 1698, affirms the number of beggars at that time to be no less than 200,000, and that it was never less than 100,000. He adds, that they composed a set of "vagabonds who lived without any subjection to the law of the land, or even to those of God and nature;" that they were frequently "guilty of robbery and murder,"—were continually "drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting together."

† This was the case in Africa, and particularly among the Susoos, a people bordering upon the settlement of Sierra Leone. From some places the schoolmasters were expelled

is that of the Danish missionaries, who have always regarded schools as the main instrument of the mission. The celebrated Zeigenbalgh, the first protestant missionary in India, declares himself fully persuaded that true Christianity in the East Indies must be founded upon Christian schools for children*. With these authorities we hazard little in insisting strongly upon the expediency of this measure.

The different orders of schools in India appear to be—1. those in Calcutta, for the children of illicit connections †; 2. those originally set on foot (as it is said) by the Baptist missionaries, for the instruction of the native children in useful literature, excluding all communication of Christian knowledge; 3. those in which the different classes of missionaries, or their catechists preside, appointed for the children of converts or others, with the express view of communicating Christian know-

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for the most treacherous and profligate conduct. Others still remain, and have a wide influence in the diffusion of Mahomedan principles. Vid. different accounts of the settlement of Sierra Leone, particularly Winterbottom's.

* Propagation of the Gospel in the East, p. 81, et passim.

† Vid Tennant's Ind. Rec. vol. i. where this class of schools is mentioned, and, if the statement is correct, deservedly without much approbation.

ledge, in addition to that which is practical or scientific.

It is with the two last of these establishments we are at present more particularly concerned, and upon each of these we shall make a few remarks.

That class of seminaries in which the children of Hindus are received merely for instruction in useful literature, to the exclusion of Christianity, are perhaps necessary in the present state of Hindostan. A direct communication of Christian knowledge would certainly be preferable to that which is circuitous. But the number of converts to our religion is not sufficiently great to employ the schools whose direct object is to teach and recommend it. If then we may not plant the soil, can we do better than prepare it? If we may not let in the light, shall we not avail ourselves of an opportunity to open the eyes? We cannot do better for the interests of religion. Christianity loves the day, and, cæteris paribus, will be most honored where she is best known. Instruct this people, and, with the lamp of knowledge in their hands, the way of truth will not long be hid from them.

That class of schools which makes religious instruction the basis of every other is above all commendation, and may well be considered as among the most powerful engines of reforming and civilizing a state. It will always be desirable to

give this order of seminaries every possible advantage; and, as the work of conversion proceeds, by degrees to draw off that part of the national fund unemployed for the maintenance of the other institutions, and pour it all into this channel. This measure indeed must always be kept in view, and is perhaps practicable to a greater extent at the present moment than we are aware. In times of famine or distress, great numbers of children are offered for sale, as slaves, by the natives. Might not children, thus obtained, be placed in these schools? And would it not be a splendid employment of that power over them which providence has given us, at the same moment we strike off the chains from their body, to introduce them to the "glorious liberty of the children of God!"

Upon the whole then it may be concluded, that the general erection of schools is a measure which demands, and deserves, the attention of government. If this appears upon a general view of the subject, it will be still more conspicuous when we come to consider an additional means of diffusing Christian knowledge in Asia, which must necessarily borrow the aid of schools.

The means to which we refer is that of *gradually introducing the English language into India.*

All present efforts to convert the Hindus must of course be made in the vernacular languages. One

generation must not perish in ignorance, that the next may be better instructed. But it does not follow, that because it is expedient to use the dialects of India for a given time, it is expedient to perpetuate the employment of them. For let the inconveniences of the present system be considered. Amongst these must be placed the time consumed in learning these dialects, the feebleness of all addresses, and the poverty of all ideas, which pass through the medium of a foreign language; the dangers of inaccuracy in translation or composition, where error is little less than ruin. If, on the contrary, it is considered that a knowledge of our language would at once throw open to the Hindus all the mines of European knowledge; that they might shoot far beyond the range which the labors of translators can possibly mark out for them; that they will thus receive not only our Religion, but our sciences, and reform go hand in hand with civilization; the attempt to substitute one language for the other will surely be regarded as of the first importance *.

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* "To give English morals to the natives in their purity, we must I imagine make them read English books. The natives will not come to us freely *but* to learn English. This they consider as the key to fortune; and on the coast the most strict of the Brahmins will have little hesitation in per-

The last means which we shall point out as expedient to employ for the diffusion of Christian knowledge, is the provision of *some remedy for the loss of Caste.*

As every person who before possessed Caste, and has notwithstanding received Christianity, has thereby forfeited his distinction, there must be multitudes who, even now, have been willing to incur this loss and ignominy, for the favor of God, and the protection of the missionaries. When therefore, for the patronage of a few dependent individuals, is substituted that of government; the deprivation of Caste will, as we have before remarked, cease to be a very formidable punishment. But of what nature, it may be asked, must this protection be? We answer, in the first place, it is a protection which government will almost *unconsciously* bestow. They are under the necessity of employing the natives in some department of the

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mitting their children to attend a free-school for the purpose of learning it." "Their ill founded ridiculous principles must be shaken to the very foundation by the communication of such liberal knowledge as a Christian can instill into the minds of youth, and fix there by means of English books; and all this without making any alarming attack directly upon the religion of the Hindus." Dr. Ker's Rep. to Gov. of Madras.

state, and in various operations of trade. But whom will they employ?—*native Hindus*, men whose interests are at war with their own, whose religion charters them in treachery, and in indolence; or *native Christians*, men, who if true to their God must be true to themselves, to their duty, to their employers? This preference then will be insensibly yielded to the converts from Brahminism, and will have this value above every other, that it will not be given till it is earned, nor enjoyed any longer than it is deserved. But the government must not remain satisfied with this imperfect and almost involuntary acknowledgment of the estimation in which they hold their fellow Christians. If they would deem it impolitic to proclaim their disposition to favour those who apostatized from Brahminism, they should at least take care that no man suffered by his apostacy. Through the variety of appointments which are lodged in their hands, this object might easily be secured. Let also manufactories be opened where these persons might subsist by their own labor, and where they might enjoy an immunity from Brahminical tyranny. Let the lands of government be worked by them. Let it be provided, that as every man will become of more value to the state by his new religion, he himself shall be as little as possible a loser by it. This plan can scarcely

fail of success;—for as the new convert will no longer recognize Hinduism as a divine institution, he will regard the loss of Caste only as a loss of civil distinction; and upon our system this distinction will be conferred upon him. He will now therefore have only to strike the balance between the patronage of Christians, and of Brahmins. Nor can it be doubted which scale will in his sight preponderate, when it is considered, that he has just embraced one system which proclaims the other to be an imposture.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE 'CONSEQUENCES' OF DIFFUSING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE IN ASIA.

IF the line of *duty* is once marked out, no views of policy will drive a good man out of it. But still, as the fate of questions such as these is very much in the hands of statesmen, and as expediency is too frequently the master rule by which they act; as, at all events, the policy of this measure is of high moment, and has been much controverted; it is of importance to enquire in what manner our Indian empire will be affected by the introduction of Christianity.

This question will be decided by the satisfaction of two distinct enquiries.

I. What are the circumstances by which our empire in the East is endangered?

II. Will these circumstances gain or lose strength by the introduction of Christianity?

I. The circumstances by which our empire in the East appears to be endangered, are three.

1. The rebellion of our Asiatic subjects.

2. The secession of the Anglo-Indians.

3. The attack of a foreign enemy.

The facility with which the yoke has been placed upon the Hindus, and the passiveness with which they have hitherto worn it, seem with many to constitute sufficient pledges that the standard of rebellion will never be successfully erected in India. But let some facts be taken into the account, and the apprehensions upon this head may not appear to be absolutely chimerical.

It is indeed true generally, that the Hindus are without that spirit of independance by which some more northern nations are characterized; that the princes would, some of them, as soon want the splendor of royalty, as be obliged to exercise its laborious functions; and that the natives, if they enjoy ease, care little from what hand it is dealt out to them. Still some late occurrences have proved, if indeed it needed a proof, that there is a point of concession at which even Hindus will stop, and beyond which it would be dangerous to force them. If we conceive the seeds of re-

bellion scattered among them by some foreign enemy, or the staff of independance erected by one of their own chiefs, the consequences could not but be formidable.

On the Gangetic side of India the number of Europeans, including civil and military establishments, cannot be estimated at more than 15,000; the surface on which they act is not less than 200,000 square miles, and the native population probably exceeds 40 millions. It is certainly a curious monument of the submissiveness of the Hindus, and as singular an evidence of the superiority which skill and talent confer, that this vast empire has so long lain prostrate at the feet of a handful of Europeans. But the maximum of Hindu submission, or of European ascendancy, is one of the most perilous problems which can exercise the political arithmeticians of Great Britain. Terror is the instrument by which our sovereignty has hitherto been guarded in India; but it is an instrument of too coarse a temper not to consume with use, or to break when it is strained.

II. The secession of the Anglo-Indians is a danger far less to be apprehended. The case of America is indeed held out as an alarming precedent upon this occasion. But it should be considered, that the English settlers in the Western

world were chiefly men disgusted with the government they had quitted; who esteemed all subordination, tyranny; and who had abandoned the spirit of loyalty long before they quited the form of it. They found also in America a climate adapted to their constitution; they were allowed to appropriate and to cultivate land, and thus to create for themselves a new country. Our countrymen in India, on the contrary, quit their native land with regret; they live abroad under the grasp of a well organized government; they find the laws and the climate equally hostile to their colonization. Hence it arises that they consider themselves but as strangers and travellers in the East, and instead of secession from Great Britain, dream of nothing but hiding alltheir cares, and depositing all their wealth, in her bosom.

If however any attempt at secession were probable, there is no room to imagine it would be successful.

It seems to be forgotten, that remote as is our Indian empire, the European subjects of it are wholly dependant upon the mother country. Their commercial dependance indeed arises in part from this remoteness; for were the climates and soils of the two countries the same, Europeans would find no difficulty in conforming to Eastern habits, and supplying all their wants upon

the spot. Their military dependance also, though not created by the distance, is not destroyed by it: for though at first sight it seems improbable that a country should be defended by another at the distance of 12,000 miles; still, when it is considered that her most formidable enemies are at an equal distance, all the improbability vanishes. Let the alliance, then, of Great Britain and European India be dissolved, and our Eastern countrymen would see, as if by the influence of the suns under which they lived, every source of domestic happiness dried up, and every sinew of war relaxed. Besides, India will ever be the property of that people who command the seas which wash her shores. She presents a vast range of coast vulnerable in a thousand points, and scarcely secure in any; with few stations in which to fix her defensive forces, and scarcely any ports where navies could either be formed or protected. The islands in the neighbouring seas, on the contrary, have tolerable harbours, and are well situated for depots. From these the vengeance of Great Britain would soon reach her contumacious children, and force them back into the ranks they had deserted.

III. The danger of 'foreign invasion,' considering the actual situation of Great Britain, is perhaps not greater than that which has last been

examined. It has been already observed, that the remoteness of the mother country is of little consequence, whilst her distance does not exceed that of her enemies. When the Cape was in the hands of foreigners, the cause for disquietude had more foundation. This might naturally supply a depot for hostile armies; a resting place upon their route; a climate which would season them for Eastern campaigns; an advanced post whence they might steal a march upon us, and carry the war into the heart of the empire before we, in England, could hear that the expedition had sailed. The invasion of Egypt by the French, has frequently been considered as having the same object. But the conquest and colonization of that country, would in itself have amply rewarded the victors; and would have enabled them to rival us, not by the ferocious method of destroying our Eastern empire, but by that of erecting an empire scarcely inferior to it in dignity and resources. It would be easier perhaps to concentrate double the trade of India in the harbours of Egypt, than to carry a single regiment through the wastes which constitute its frontiers on the side of India. Whilst, therefore, the navies of England ride triumphant in the Indian seas, and the islands sprinkled about them are in our possession, little fear need be en-

tertained that any foreign enemy will rob us of our oriental conquests.

Upon the whole, of the three sources of danger to our Eastern empire which have been examined, the rebellion of the natives appears to be the most formidable, whilst the secession of our Anglo-Indians seems little more than to deserve a place among them.

It is observable, however, that although these sources of danger may each when alone be inconsiderable, still, under the various combinations of which they are susceptible, they may possibly assume a very different aspect.

Upon this point we may remark, in the first place, that if the secession of the Anglo-Indians is not a matter of any apprehension, far less should we apprehend their junction with a foreign enemy, for purposes hostile to the mother country. Every argument adduced to prove the one, tends doubly to establish the other. It is not, however, so difficult to suppose the combination of the first source of danger, with either of the two others; and their joint operation might in either case be fatal. After all, therefore, in every question which respects the safety of our Indian empire, the situation of the natives deserves to occupy the highest place.

This being established, it follows that our second

enquiry, into the influence which the introduction of Christianity into India will have upon those circumstances by which our Eastern empire is endangered, ultimately hinges upon these two points. 1. *What effect will the introduction of Christianity have upon the physical and political power of the Asiatic population in our dominions;* And 2. *What influence upon their attachment to us.* If, on the whole, it should appear that in consequence of the application of this measure, their ability to injure us would encrease in a greater ratio than their disposition not to injure us, the inexpediency of the measure would be at once established, and vice versa.

1. *Would their power to injure us be encreased?*

Here it should be premised that, although their abstract power as a people should be encreased, it would not necessarily follow that their power to injure us would encrease. This distinction we shall keep in view, and endeavour to demonstrate in the first place, that their physical and political power as a people would increase; and, secondly, that their power to injure us would by no means experience a similar augmentation.

In the first place, *The physical and political power of the Hindus as a people would materially encrease by the introduction of Christianity.*

This point can require little demonstration, if

the view which has formerly been given of the Hindu character and condition is admitted to be just. For it is at once an evidence of the universality of the Christian system, and of its utter incompatibility with all error, that *no one* of the evils which have been delineated could survive its complete introduction into Hindostan. When it is taken into the account, also, that upon our scheme, it is not proposed to introduce Christianity alone into India, but to place in her train all useful literature, and every civilizing art and science,—the consequent advancement of Hindus cannot be a matter of doubt.

It would be curious to follow the native convert through the different stages of his improvement. The first strong and unfettered exercise of his mind was perhaps when he resolved to abandon the superstition of his fathers, and to embrace Christianity. This would of itself strengthen and discipline him for future exertions. When fairly entered upon his Christian course, he would be swayed by all the emotions, and betray all the surprise, of a person placed in a new state of being. No longer regarding the distinction of Castes,—if a Bramin, he would feel that a deficiency of virtue and talent would sink him to the lowest class, and if a Sooder, that the possession of these qualities would raise him to the highest. No longer conceiving himself

lashed on by the iron hand of 'destiny,' he would think, resolve, and act with freedom and vigor. A high sense of duty would vanquish his 'indolence;' and a love of simplicity correct his 'cunning.' Entering into the mines of science and art, which Christian labor and ingenuity have opened, he would find vast subjects of speculation, fresh matter of humility, and nobler objects of ambition. Contrasting himself with his new associates, and the man he is with the man he might have been, he will learn more and more to abhor the superstition which has done him this wrong, and endeavor to condense in a short period those improvements which Christians have enjoyed the privilege of cultivating at leisure.

When Christianity has wrought this advancement in the character of her convert, his situation in the state would instantly experience a corresponding improvement. Power of any other kind begets political power. As the resources and capability of the citizen multiply, he fills a larger space in the eye of his governors; his rights and privileges are extended; the laws wear a less stern aspect; the public voice carries more weight. Amongst those clans of savages who live by plunder, where each man's arm adds his proportion to the general heap, if any form of government prevails, it is that the furthest possible removed from tyranny. It is

only where the state expects or derives little from the exertions of each individual; where she pays one part of the population to support the other in indolence; where the mass are contented to purchase ease even at the expence of freedom, that despotisms are erected. The different governments of Asia, for instance, have not become despotic by virtue of any original decree, or by a conspiracy among the crowned heads to enslave the East; but through the character of the people. Debased by the united influence of the climate, and of some terrific superstition, the Asiatics want universally the virtue and energy which are requisite in the subjects of a free government. Worthy of chains, therefore, it is not wonderful that hands have been found to put them on. It is not indeed probable, considering the extent of the empire, and the genius of the people, that in Hindostan, even when converted to Christianity, the very freest government would be the best. But the above remarks may be sufficient to shew that, in the improved state of their religion, the Hindus would be entitled to claim, and their rulers disposed to bestow, a milder form of administration than that to which they are at present subjected.

But *secondly*, this increase in the powers, and improvement in the situation of the Hindus, by no means implies a corresponding increase in their

power to injure us. This will be seen from several considerations.

In the first place, if by the improvement of every citizen the state lost exactly as much as he acquired; or if during the progress of his improvement, that of the state was stationary; then his absolute advancement would become relative also, and might perhaps endanger the government of which he was a subject. But the person of every citizen may be considered as a bank, which the state enriches indeed by her several deposits, but from which her capital is restored to her with a vast accumulation of interest. Nor is this all. The ratio of improvement in a state, is one compounded of those which measure the improvement of every citizen. So that at the end of a given time, her powers to resist aggression are more augmented than those of every citizen to commit it. Since, then, all power is comparative, a government thus fortified can fear nothing. It has no avenues of approach, no weak points, no "vulnerable heel," where rebellion may strike. Examine the cases in which insurrection has prospered. The resources have been few; the treasury beggared; the arm of the executive feeble; the armies ill appointed, ill disciplined, or ill paid; the population indolent and poor. The surest antidote to these evils is an active, enriched, and enlightened population.

Again, it is a mistake to conceive that the increased power of the whole mass of the people facilitates rebellion, unless indeed we suppose universal concert, which scarcely ever takes place. If we search for the instances of rebellion, we shall not find them in those states where the power of the people is the greatest. In these indeed it is *not only less probable*, but *more difficult*. Rebellion in most cases originates either with individuals, or with small bodies of men. But the power of a few to disturb the state, diminishes as the power of the whole people increases; just as in a great machine, the irregular movement of an inferior wheel is counteracted by the power of the whole. If we follow the history of a despotism through its several stages, we shall gain the strongest confirmation of these positions. A despotic government is usually erected, in the first instance, upon the ruins of some milder form, by one man of talent profiting from the weakness of his countrymen. In this case, therefore, the abasement, and not the power of the citizens, gives birth to that rebellion which subverts the government. Those continual revolutions, also, which transfer the sceptre from the hand of one tyrant to another, have generally the same source. When the reigning despot has chanced not to inherit the talents, together with the sceptre of his predecessor, an usurper arises; and

buoyed up by that "ascendancy which strong minds always possess over weak ones;" raises once more the standard of rebellion, and almost without opposition, cuts his way to the throne. In this case also the rebellion must be charged upon the imbecillity, and not upon the strength of the people. On the contrary, in a free government, where the moving force of every individual is the greatest, his efforts produce the least change; because such a government presents a system of springs and checks, in which each impulse is destroyed by one in a contrary direction.

It may be objected, that these impulses are as likely, in this improved state of society, to unite as to clash; and that in this case the power of each individual would hasten the fall of the state. This, however, is not true. For rebellion, as we have said, generally originates in the desire of a *party* to carry their end by means hostile to the existing government. But by our hypothesis this particular government is favourable to the improvement and happiness of the great mass of the population; therefore the interests of the larger portion would clash with that of the less, and produce the opposite impulse we have described. Such a state of things presents us an epitome of the solar system; where the disturbing forces either destroy one another, or are counteracted by

the steady influence of those great forces of the universe, which uniformly follow their particular laws, and carry on their appointed operations.

There is one other point to be considered. This question assumes, either that the whole or that a part of our Hindu subjects shall be converted to Christianity. If the first event takes place, and they should rebel, it must be remembered that, instead of deriving assistance from other Indian powers, they would be scourged by them as apostates. If, which is the most probable, only a part is Christian, the opposite classes would keep each other in check, and make rebellion impossible. This state of things would indeed, in the most complete manner, fulfil the intentions of that policy which in the construction of our Indian army has introduced into every corps a certain proportion of Hindus and Mahomedans. It was a maxim of the great Frederic, that any third power of Europe who chose to declare war against England, might rely upon the assistance of France, and *vice versa*. In like manner, which ever of the two divisions of our Asiatic forces exhibits a spirit of contumacy, the British always find their hands strengthened by the force of the opposite party.

Upon the whole then, it seems probable, that although the physical and political powers of the Hindus would be increased by the introduction of

Christianity, no increase of their power to injure us would necessarily take place. Admitting, however, that this were not the case, let us examine, secondly, whether under this new system the decrease of *inclination* would not more than counterbalance the supposed increase of power to injure us.

1. In the first place, it should be considered, that every increase of power would make the Hindus proportionably debtors to Great Britain. Any increase of power or improvement they now acquire, is gained by chance or by stealth. It can in no sense be esteemed a benefit voluntarily bestowed. Now it should be observed of nations, that their public character frequently takes a higher tone, and breathes a nobler spirit, than that of the individuals who compose them. The temptations to do wrong are weaker, when the interests to be provided for are general instead of private; the crime is public and barefaced; and the vices of individuals are curbed by the contrariety of dispositions even among the bad. If, therefore, we should not expect in the scenes of private life that good spontaneously yielded would be abused; and that improvement would be pointed at the bosom, instead of being paid back into it; much less should we expect it in the dealings of a nation. Colonies, though almost always harshly treated by the mother

country, have usually winked at her infirmities and sternness; and perhaps no instance can be adduced, in which the offspring has not repaid all that the parent had a right to demand. Why then should it be thought that the Hindus will be the first to furnish this bad precedent? Why should it be feared that they will sting the hand which has given them political life and vigour? Those who in other matters judge far more favourably of the natives of Hindostan than we do, have even less ground than ourselves for any such apprehensions. Not only, however, should the manner in which the benefit is communicated, but its peculiar nature, be taken into the account. The species of knowledge which many of the American savages have derived from Europeans, is an enlarged acquaintance with all the catalogue of spirituous liquors.—The Jesuits of Paraguay, among many better lessons, inculcated political principles utterly hostile to all administrations but that of the holy fathers. Now the respective sovereigns of these countries, if they could be ascertained, were certainly not likely to gain more valuable subjects by this introduction of European light among them. But with such instructions, let those be compared which it is here proposed for Great Britain to communicate. It is projected to teach the natives all that can purify and humanize the mind;—all the precepts of reli-

gion, and all the lessons of civilization. These instructions, whilst they infuse every other virtue, will not pass over gratitude;—and 'mercy,' in this case, as in every other, will doubly bless;—the Hindus who 'take,' and the English who 'give.'

2. The present situation of the Hindus with regard to Great Britain, is sufficiently singular and unpropitious. The injuries we have done them are matter of sight and touch; whilst the benefits we have imparted are, in a degree, subtle and recondite. The natives can, for instance, perfectly comprehend the evils of war;—can see fields deluged with blood, and know whose blood it is, and in whose cause it has been shed. The Nabobs of Oude and of the Carnatic can measure to a hair the calamity of subsidizing troops as centinels upon their own persons; or of sealing contracts, which transmit the revenues from their own coffers to those of the British government. All this is intelligible to an understanding, which does not, at the same time, recognize the quiet excellence of the trial by jury. If indeed our Indian ledger were nicely balanced, and we had discharged by our beneficence all the debts of unkindness we had contracted; still it would not follow that this adjustment would be admitted by the Hindus. Men are always extremely slow to esteem any thing a bene-

fit, of which they cannot plainly discern the motives and the end; whilst they count as injurious not only the ill done, but the good neglected.

If this portrait of Hindostan is at all faithful, we at once see that for such evils the introduction of Christianity and her train of civilizing arts is the appropriate remedy. The operation of this measure would be of a compound nature. It would close the eyes upon all past injuries, and open them upon past and present benefits. Its own gifts would neither be suspected nor undervalued, because their influence upon the individual would be direct and appropriate; but upon the state reflex and remote. The general light diffused would also display in their proper colours the lenity and rectitude of British administration; the natives would be refined up to the standard of the laws by which they are governed; and Great Britain would no longer drudge on in the hopeless task of conciliating those who cannot comprehend or welcome her benevolent labours.

3. One of the present safeguards of our Indian government is, not that it exactly meets the wishes of the Hindus, but that out of many yokes, it is certainly the easiest. If this is the fact under the present circumstances; when Christianity, with all its mitigations and advantages, shall have been introduced, the comparative view will every day

become more favourable to Great Britain. If it is admitted that even then the Hindu will not anxiously covet our dominion, to what government, it may be asked, will he give a preference? Would he desire, for instance, to elevate a *native Prince* to the Musnud? In answer to this, let it be remembered that the Hindu is not a patriot. He is not attached, like the inhabitant of many other regions, to the native prince; to his countrymen in general; or to that land which is their common parent. There is no reason to believe that the sceptres of the native princes were often swayed with that mildness or virtue which would erect their dominion in the hearts of the people. The kingdom of Nepaul, which was subdued by the Mahomedans, has preserved to us a fair specimen of Hindu administration; and the features of the government are such as to convince us that the Indian monarchs did not redeem the princes of Asia from that title of despot with which they have been universally branded.

If we examine also those Hindu principalities which the Mahomedans have suffered to survive their conquests;—"It is a remark*," says Mr. Orme, "warranted by constant observation,

* Orme's Historical Fragments, p. 434.

that the people are subjected to more and severer oppression than when ruled by the Moors."

It appears then, that views of policy would scarcely drive the Hindus to any very violent struggles in favour of a native monarch. Nor need we apprehend that a spirit of loyalty will supply the place of interested motives. The Hindu has little affection for his countrymen as such. This may be charged in part upon the artificial distinctions of Caste, which, by teaching him to hate a part of the population, have rendered him indifferent to the whole; and to those continually recurring scenes of warfare, in which, hired by contending leaders, native, opposed to native, fights the battles of ambition and usurpation. Nor does the bosom of the Hindu glow with any stronger feelings towards the princes of his own blood, than towards his fellow subjects. Always the property of strangers, a foreign yoke sits the most naturally upon him. Always the prey of the strongest, his obedience is yielded, not by virtue of a compact between prince and people, but upon compulsion;—the monarch seizing all he can discover, and the subject yielding nothing he can conceal.

If these reasonings evince the improbability of the Indians rising to assert the claims of a native prince, in opposition to the improved administration of Great Britain, it will be still easier to shew that

they are not likely to prefer any other *foreign sceptre* to ours. Successively the victim of thirteen conquests, Asia has seemed to find in every new invader a greater scourge than the last. The triumphs of Alexander alone were those in which his captives had reason to participate. The reign of the Mahomedans is scarcely marked by any of those bright days which usually break in upon the gloom of despotism, and in which the prince sometimes loosens the chain that he feels is in no danger of being broken. The antipathy of the Hindus to the Moors is consequently unqualified and immeasurable. If the contrast they draw between their government and that of Great Britain is somewhat less decisive in our favour than we might anticipate, this is only because the sense of recent injuries is always the strongest. That nation is indeed fortunate which succeeds to a conquest of the Mahomedans; as every other form of polity must gain by a comparison with theirs. The superior confidence with which the British are treated by the Hindus, is evinced by that frankness with which they have disclosed to them all those recesses of their religion which the Moors have sought to penetrate in vain.

Upon the whole then, if it is conceivable that the Hindus, even under the operation of the proposed measure, should be able or disposed to fancy

a government more favourable to them than the English, still the alternatives between which they must choose will preserve them willing subjects of our dominion.

IV. It must be considered, that one of the consequences of introducing Christianity into India will be a great *assimilation* of the habits and tastes of the Hindus to those of Great Britain. Now this assimilation will operate in several ways to destroy any disposition in the natives to injure us.

In the first place, it will strengthen the bond of affection between the two countries. The genius of the greatest conqueror of antiquity was not less displayed in retaining, than in making his conquests; and "assimilation" appears to have been the master principle by which he worked. The standard of taste and practice which he attempted to erect in the vanquished nations was not that of his own country, but one to which the manners of all countries would suit themselves upon a reduced scale. It was that common mean where all extremes would meet. Using this for a centre, we see him endeavouring to draw both his own nation and the conquered nations towards it;—first, discovering the points on which all his subjects should agree, and then promoting this agreement. To advance this work of assimilation still more rapidly, he himself took his wives from the conquered countries; he

prescribed the same course to his followers; and planted colonies of Greeks throughout the captive regions. "From measures such as these it arose," says Montesquieu, "that, after his death, when the Greeks had reduced themselves as it were to a state of annihilation, not a single province of Persia revolted*."

The constitution of our nature might indeed lead us to anticipate those results from which this distinguished person so largely profited. Self-love teaches men to love those who resemble themselves. Without, in fact, this assimilation takes place, it may be said of the conquering and the conquered people (to borrow Lord Bacon's allusion), that "like the clay and iron in the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, they may cleave, but they will never incorporate."

Again—assimilation will strengthen our commercial alliance with the Hindus. As the natives adopt the habits and manners of Great Britain, they will every day find the produce of her manufactures more necessary to them. Hence our commerce with India will soon exhibit a face different from that which it at present wears. We now do little more than purchase; we shall then

* Esprit des Loix, liv. x. ch. 13.

barter. Commerce of any kind creates a mutual dependance between the trading nations. But when the supply of commodities is reciprocal, and the exchange complete, there appears to be no other artificial tie which has the same power. The mutual interchange of subjects; the multiplicity of joint interests; the numberless points of contact and union; the value which fashion sets upon foreign commodities; the contempt which a wealthy and refined nation soon learns for its own staple produce—all these circumstances create an abhorrence of rupture; the fictitious wants get more weight than those which are real; and the two people would, in many cases, as soon part with their liberty as with their commerce. Let Christianity then have her due influence in India and produce this assimilation, and the Hindus will themselves guard the union of which they are now the enemies. Our ascendancy will no longer be carried at the point of the bayonet, but be guaranteed by the wishes of a whole people.

Lastly, the effects of this principle of assimilation should be considered in the case of either insurrection or invasion separating the two nations. The relations of commerce constantly survive the revolutions of kingdoms; and though expelled from their channels, for a time, the various articles of barter soon find their way back to them,

The separation of America from the mother-country was long prevented by their mutual commercial dependancy: and though the jealousy and indignation, consequent upon this event, shut the ports on either side the Atlantic for a short period, they were soon thrown open, and the trade established upon a basis perhaps more advantageous to Great Britain than that she had herself laid down. The assimilation of America to Great Britain was indeed wrought to our hands, and our commercial relation grew out of it. Let the same resemblance be formed in the Hindus, and they also will be suitors for our commerce. The bond of union will then be tied by themselves instead of us, and we shall have this strong hold upon them, that they cannot do without us.

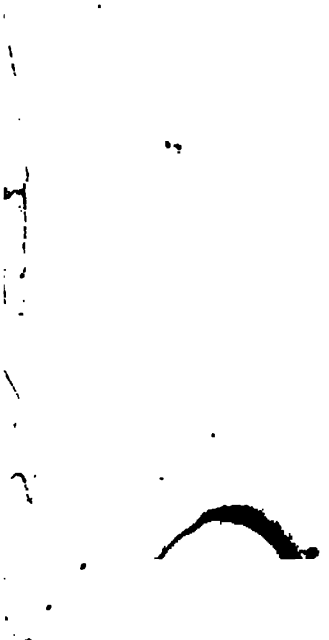
These two facts, in short, may satisfy the most sordid or sagacious contriver for the Eastern interests of Great Britain, of the policy of introducing Christianity into India—that if, in the natural course of things, the connection of the two people should terminate at a period when Christianity shall have made considerable progress, the improved commerce and increased revenue will have more than discharged the fee simple of our territory; and that whenever the political alliance shall be dissolved, a commercial alliance will arise more natural, more honourable, and more productive,

than that by which Great Britain now extorts her millions from India.

It will now, we think, be admitted, that upon the scheme of diffusing Christian knowledge in India, the supposed increase of power will be more than counterbalanced by the decrease of her inclination to injure Great Britain. One remark alone remains to be made. The Hindus are not as stationary as Great Britain would have them. The troops of the neighbouring princes daily catch something of the discipline and vigour of Europeans. Our own black army has become formidable almost to its masters. The power to injure us, therefore, is continually increasing. Can it be thought that upon the present system, the disposition to injure us suffers a proportionate decrease? Or can it be hoped, that where forbearance is the effect of fear, it will not cease, when the cause shall cease?

THE END.

W. Pople, Printer,
22, Old Boswell Court, Strand.



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